

A Centaur's Life

8



story & art
KEI MURAYAMA





clippity

clop

SORRY!
WERE YOU
WAITING
LONG?

HEE
HEE!

OH, HEY.
KILLER
DISGUISE.

BUT
ANY-
WAY.

PROBABLY
HER
BUILD
AND
HEIGHT.

WOMP-
WOMP~

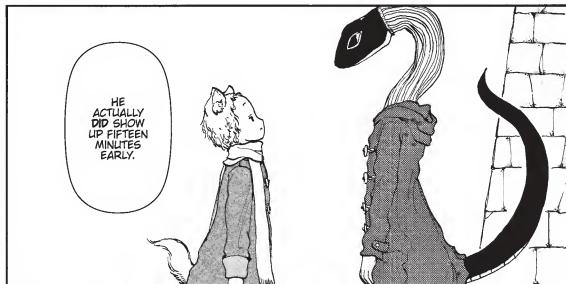
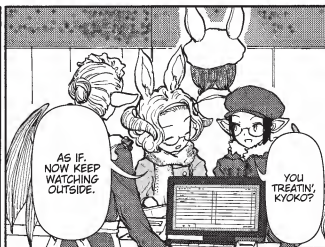
BUT
FOR SOME
REASON,
IT'S STILL
UNMISTAKABLY
HIME...

CHAPTER 45

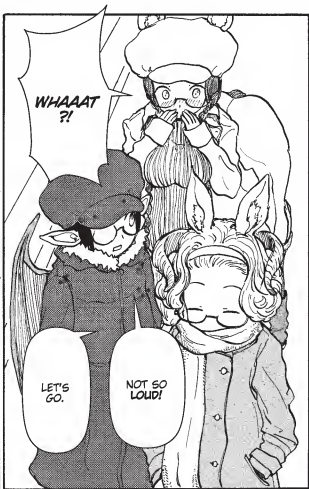
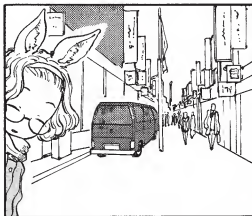
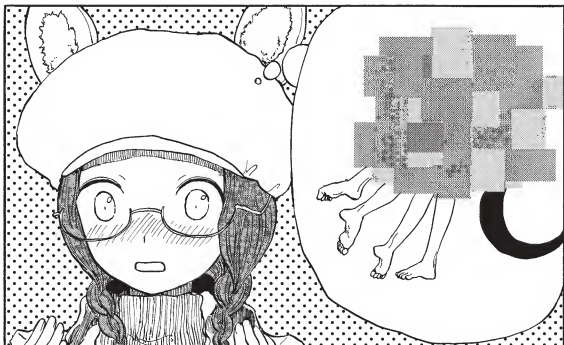


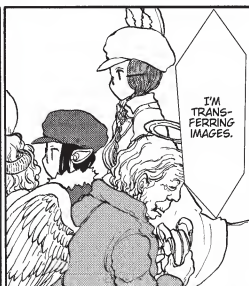
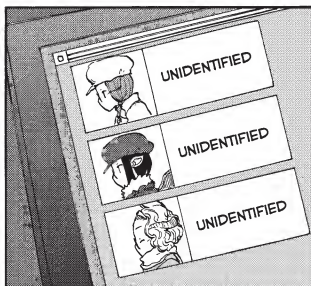
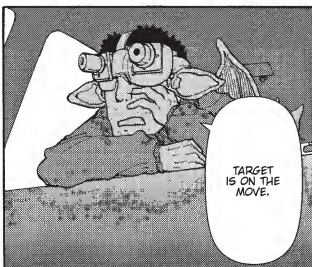
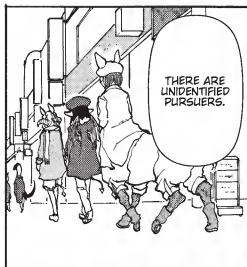
WE
SHOULD
BE
FOCUSED
ON
THAT.

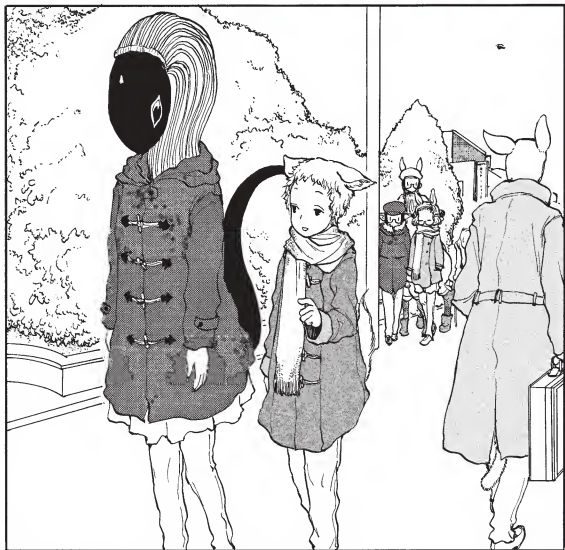
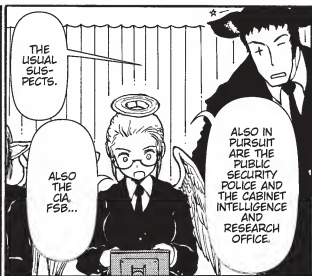
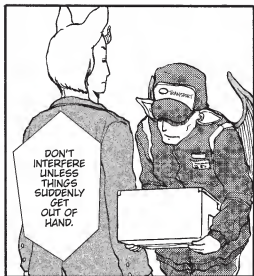
COFFEE SHOP Dunwich

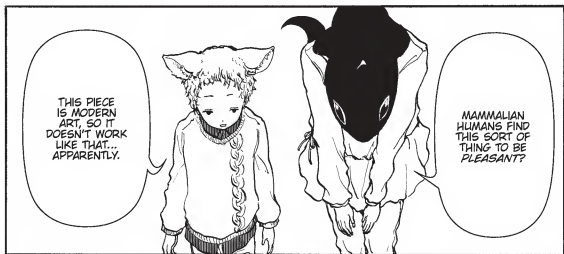
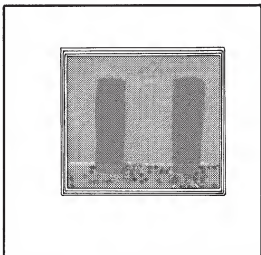
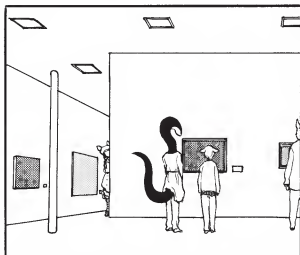
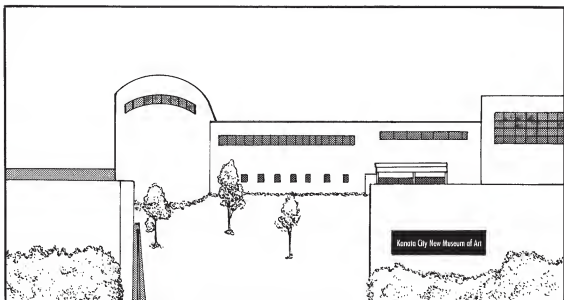














TRADITIONALLY,
"FINE ART" IS
WHAT WE CALL
THE CREATION
OF INHERENTLY
BEAUTIFUL
THINGS, BE THEY
PICTURES OR
OBJECTS.



I REALLY
DON'T KNOW
MUCH ABOUT
IT AT ALL, BUT
TO TRY AND
EXPLAIN...



INDUSTRIAL
TECHNOLOGY
ALLOWS US
TO MASS-
PRODUCE
INTRICATE
OBJECTS
CHEAPLY AND
FLAWLESSLY.



BUT IN THE
MODERN AGE,
PHOTOGRAPHIC
TECHNOLOGY CAN
CAPTURE SUCH
IMAGES MORE
FAITHFULLY AND
ACCURATELY
THAN ANY
PAINTING.



IT'S NOT
LIKE YOU
COULD JUST
GO DOWN TO
THE LOCAL
ART SUPPLY
STORE AND
PICK UP A
PAINTBRUSH,
AFTER ALL.

IN THE
OLDEN
DAYS,
IT WAS
QUITE
RARE TO
BE ABLE
TO CREATE,
LET ALONE
OWN, SUCH
THINGS.

BUT IT HAD
TO BE SOMETHING
PLEASING TO ANYONE
WHO SAW IT. TAKE
THE MOVIE WAR OF
THE WORLDS, FOR
INSTANCE. EVEN
WITH TEN TIMES THE
MONEY, YOU CAN'T
WATCH A MOVIE
TEN TIMES AS
INTERESTING.



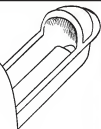
BEAUTY,
WHICH HAD
ONCE BEEN
CONSIDERED
SPECIAL,
BECAME AN
EVERYDAY THING
IN ABUNDANCE.
IT BECAME
NECESSARY TO
FIND A NEW TYPE
OF SPECIAL
BEAUTY.

AFRICAN ART,
WHICH HAD
PREVIOUSLY
BEEN THOUGHT
OF AS CRUDE,
STARTED TO
RECEIVE
RECOGNITION.



SO PEOPLE
STARTED
DRAWING
THINGS FROM
A SUBJECTIVE
PERSPECTIVE--
THINGS THAT
COULDN'T BE
CAPTURED BY A
PHOTOGRAPH.

EVENUALLY,
EVEN THAT
DISAPPEARED,
AND YOU
STARTED
SEEING
FACTORY-MADE
OBJECTS THAT
WEREN'T
BEAUTIFUL
AT ALL. PUT
ON DISPLAY
AS ART.

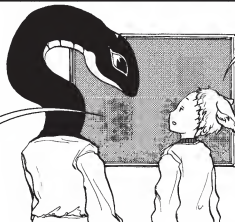


BUT EVEN
THOSE STILL
HAD SOME KIND OF
ASPECT OF VISUAL
ATTRACTIVENESS.

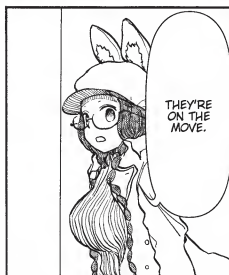


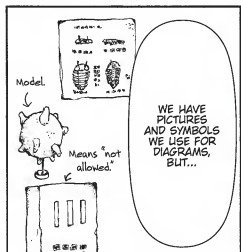
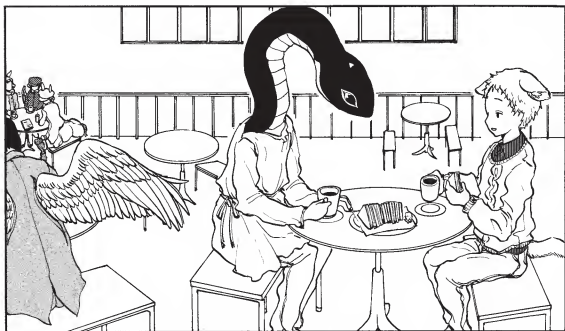
PEOPLE
CONTINUED
TOYING WITH
STANDARDS OF
BEAUTY, AND
YOU STARTED
SEEING
ABSTRACT
ART, OR
ART WHICH
DISPLAYED
NO IMAGE
AT ALL.

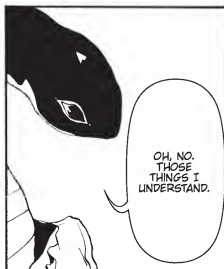
AT LEAST,
THAT'S THE
GIST OF
WHAT I'VE
HEARD.

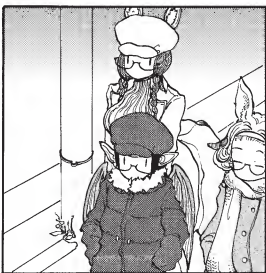
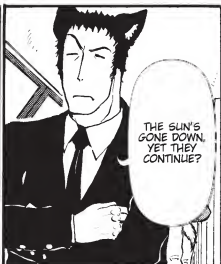
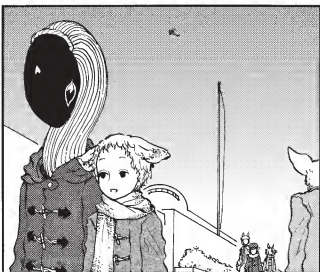


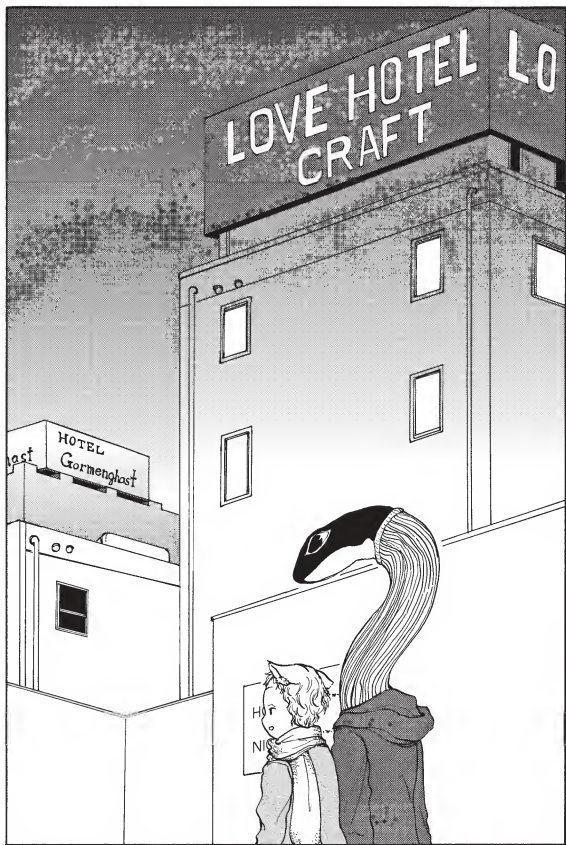
AT THIS POINT,
IT'S TURNED INTO
A SORT OF GAME,
TO SEE HOW MANY
DIFFERENT WAYS
THE CONCEPT AND
CONTEXT OF
"ART" CAN BE
REINTERPRETED.

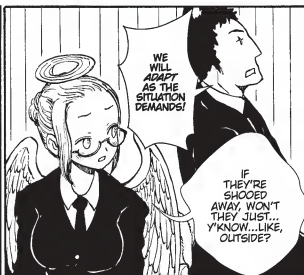
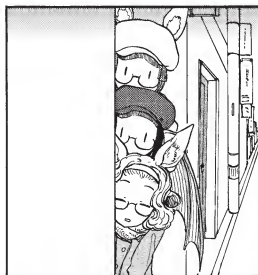
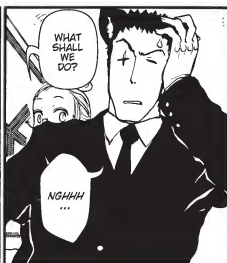
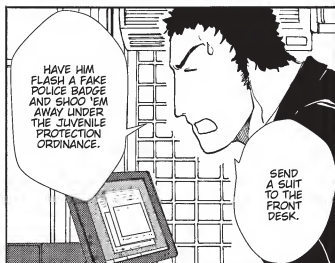


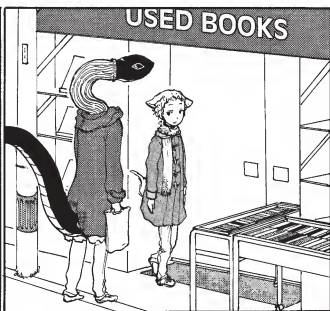
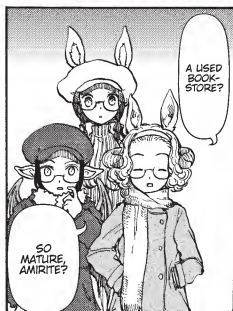
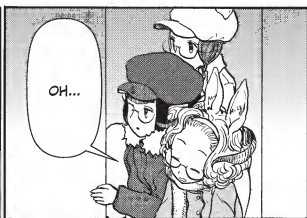
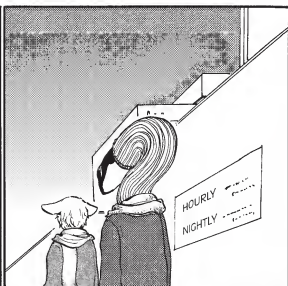


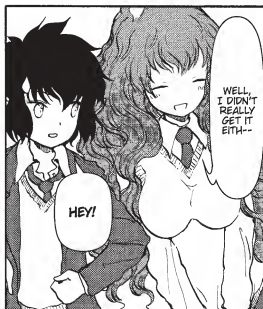












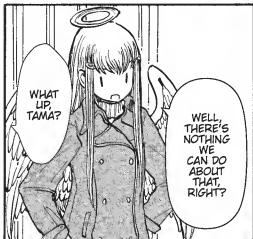
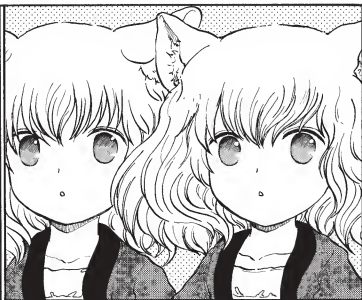
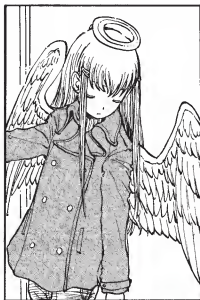
A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (FRANCE)

AT THE LIBERATION FESTIVAL, CENTAURS DRESSED AS GUARDS OF THE FIRST FRENCH EMPIRE MARCH DOWN A LARGE STREET IN PARIS, BEGINNING AT WHAT WERE ONCE CENTAUR "STUD FARMS" AND ARRIVING AT THE FORMER BARRACKS. THE WESTERN CENTAURS, ONCE "BRED" AS SLAVES, HAVE NO HISTORY OF THEIR ANCIENT PAST. OLD TRACES OF CENTAURS BEAR NO CONNECTION TO THE CURRENT STATE, AND SERVE AS LITTLE MORE THAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RELICS. THE HISTORY OF WESTERN CENTAURS AS PEOPLE BEGAN WITH THEIR EMANCIPATION FROM THE SHACKLES OF SLAVERY BY THAT HERO OF LEGEND, NAPOLEON. AND SO, TOO, BEGAN AN AGE OF GLORY. THE IMPERIAL ARMY, COMPOSED MAINLY OF LIBERATED CENTAURS, CONQUERED LANDS ACROSS EUROPE, AGGRESSIVELY WIELDING THEIR REPUTATION AS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE IN THE WORLD.

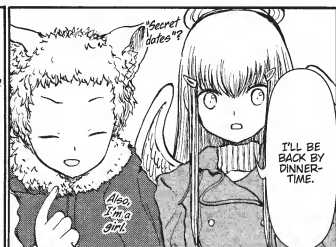
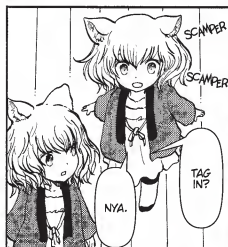
AFTER THE FALL OF THE FIRST EMPIRE CAME THE REVIVAL OF THE MONARCHY, WHICH DESPISED THE CENTAUR SOLDIERS, WHO WERE ALMOST INVARIABLY VEHEMENT BONAPARTISTS. THE MONARCHY WAS ULTIMATELY UNABLE TO STOP THE LIBERATION FESTIVAL, JUST AS THE FRENCH REPUBLIC THAT FOLLOWED WAS UNABLE TO STOP THE MARCH OF THE NAZIS WHO WOULD CAPTURE PARIS. ONE NEED LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THAT "MOST MISERABLE OF MONARCHS," KING LOUIS, TO SEE WHAT FATE AWAITED ANYONE WHO DARED TRY.

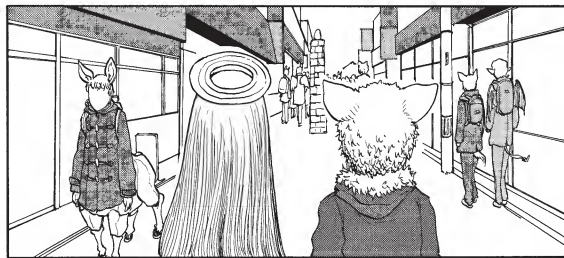
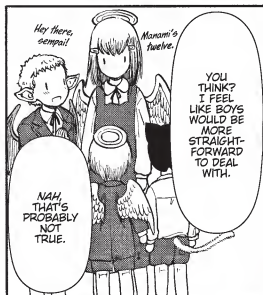


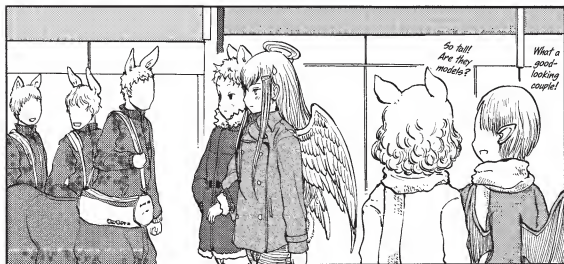
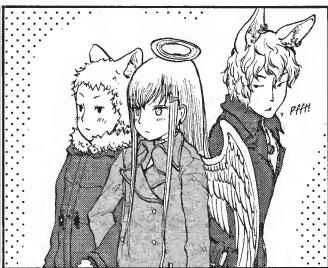


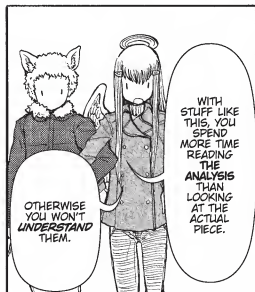
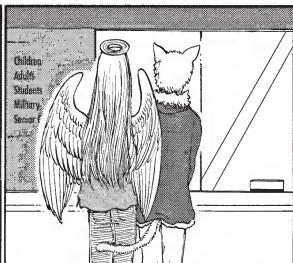
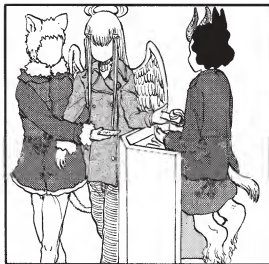
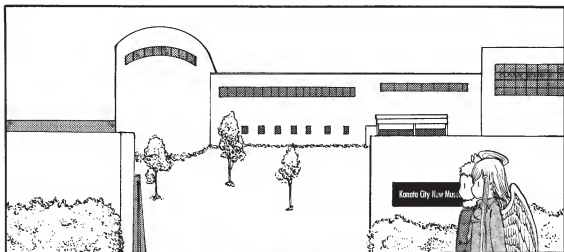
CHAPTER 46



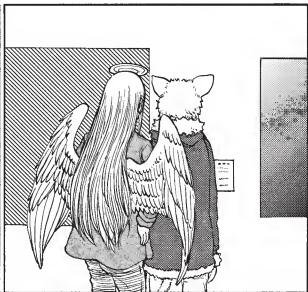


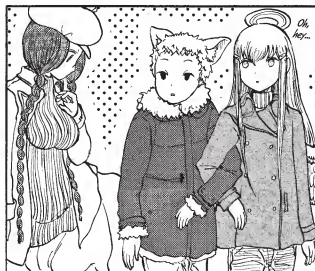


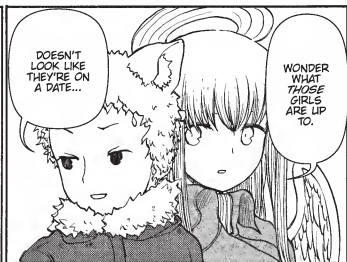
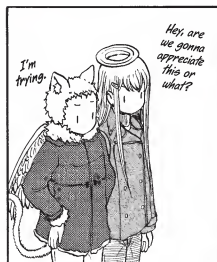
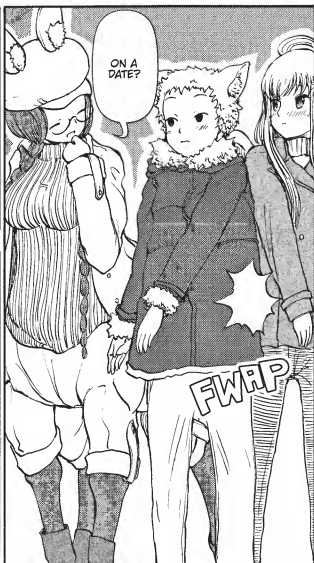


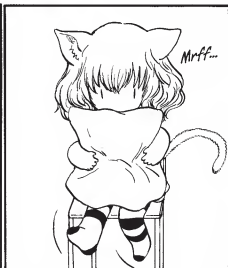


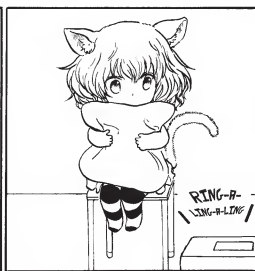
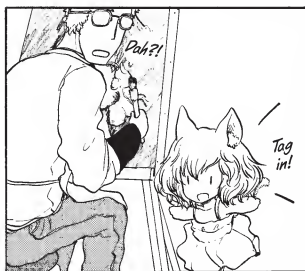
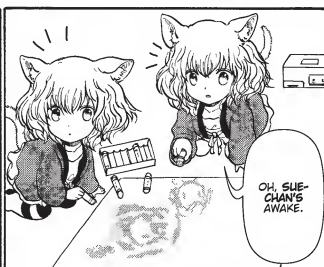
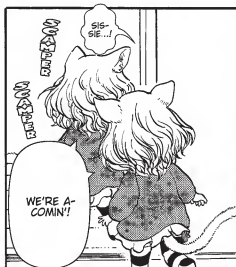
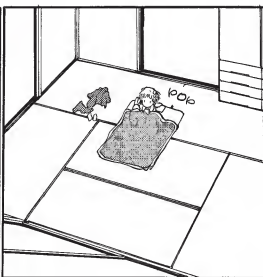
WITH
STUFF LIKE
THIS, YOU
SPEND
MORE TIME
READING
THE
ANALYSIS
THAN
LOOKING
AT THE
ACTUAL
PIECE.

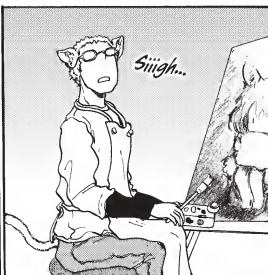




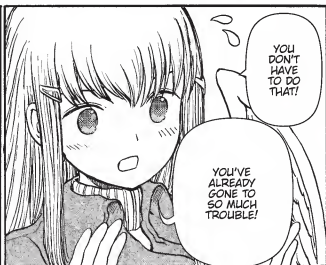
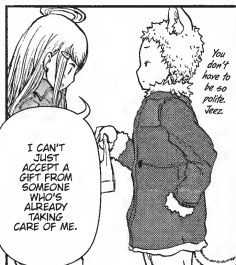
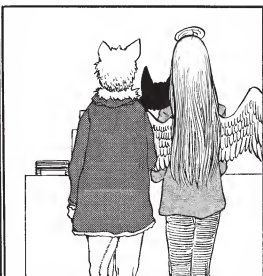


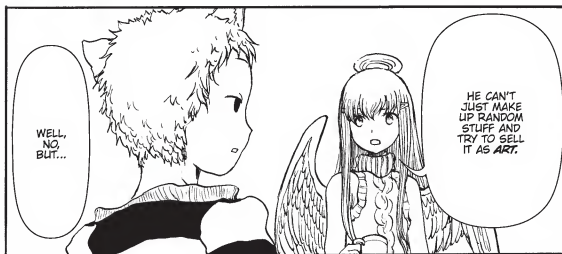


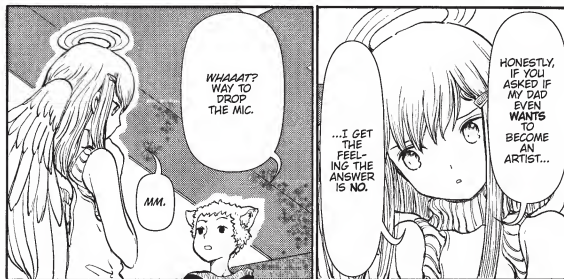
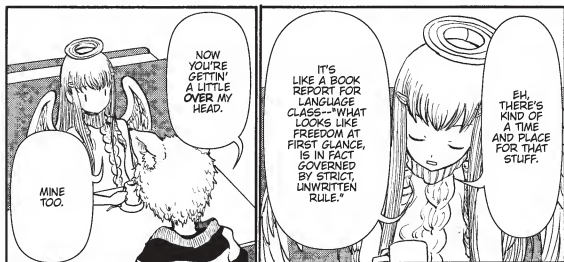


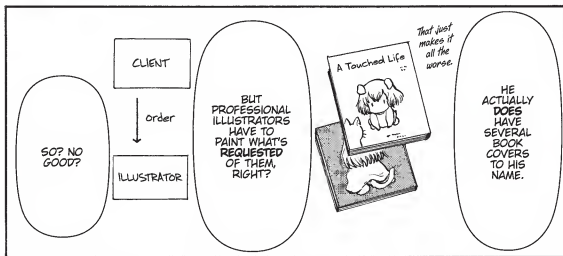
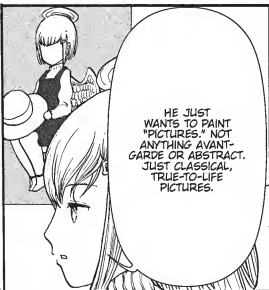


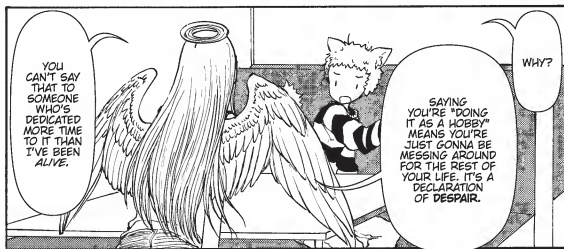
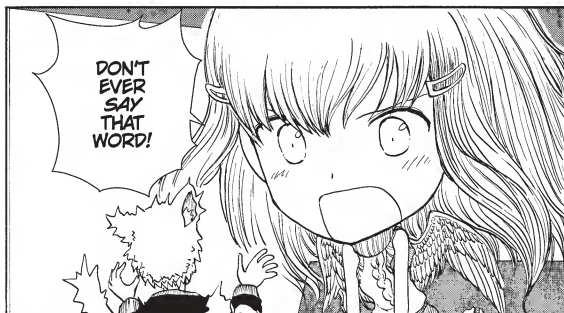
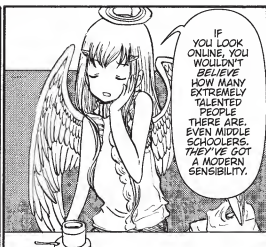


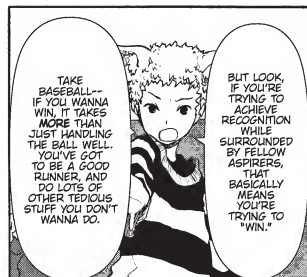


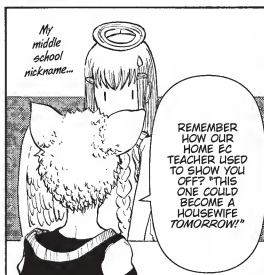
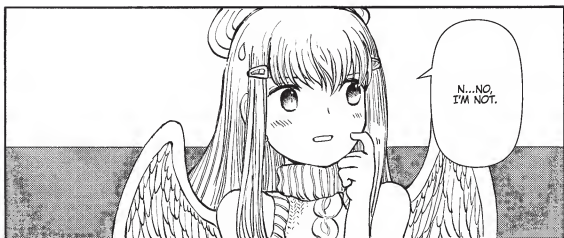


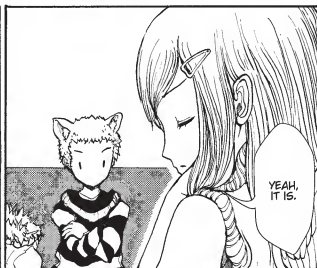
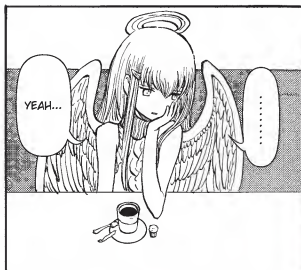


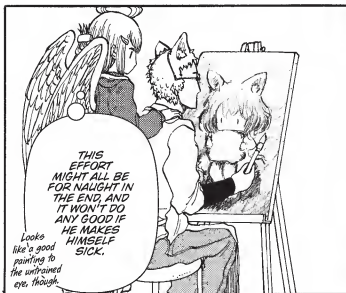
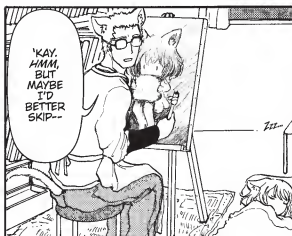
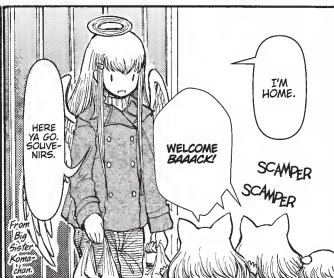
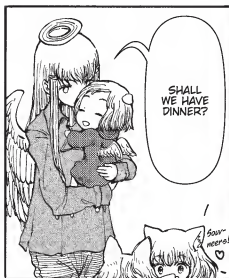












A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (MONGOLIA)

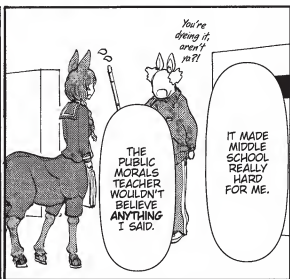
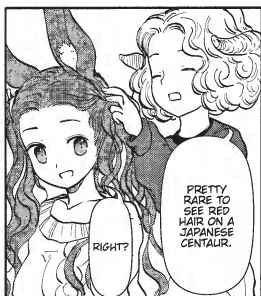
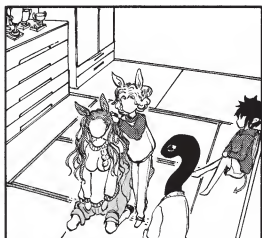
AT THE NAADAM FESTIVAL HELD THROUGHOUT THE NATION OF MONGOLIA, THREE GAMES ARE TRADITIONALLY HELD: WRESTLING, HORSE RACING, AND ARCHERY. ALL THREE SERVED AS DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE RISE OF THE UNPRECEDENTED MONGOLIAN EMPIRE ESTABLISHED BY THE LEGENDARY CONQUEROR GENGHIS KHAN. THE NEIGHBORING RED, CLASS-BASED NATION, LONG HELD AT THE MERCY OF THE MONGOLS, WOULD EVENTUALLY DECLARE MONGOLIA A SATELLITE NATION, BOLDLY IMPOSING UPON THE LAND'S TRADITIONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO CUT THEM OFF FROM THEIR PAST. MONGOLS WERE FORBIDDEN FROM LEARNING THEIR OWN HISTORY OR PAYING REVERENCE TO THEIR HISTORICAL HEROES. HOWEVER, INEVITABLE SOCIAL UPHEAVAL LED TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE CLASS-BASED SOCIETY, AND THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR HISTORY WERE REVIVED.

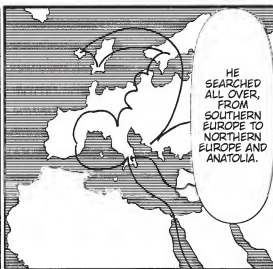
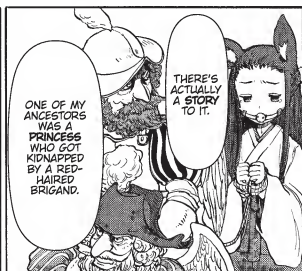
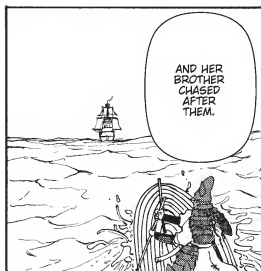
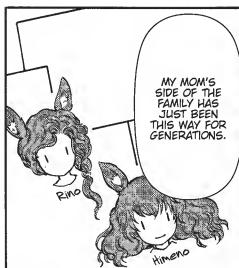
THUS, THE BEAUTIFUL FORM OF THE MONGOLIAN ARCHER ADORNED IN TRADITIONAL GARB, SKILLFULLY LETTING LOOSE AN ARROW, IS A SIGHT STILL SEEN TODAY.

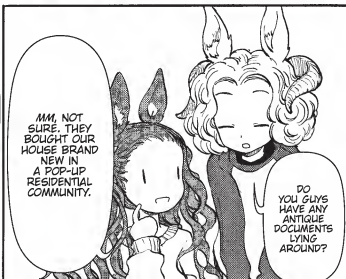
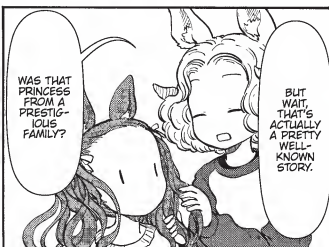
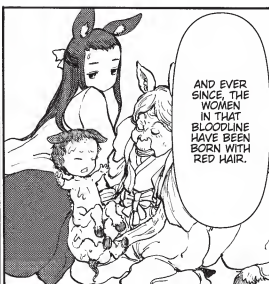


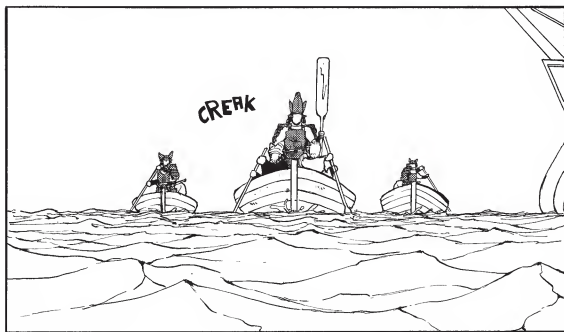
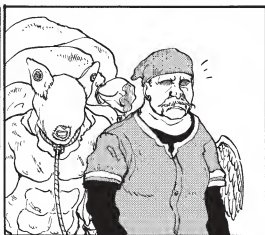
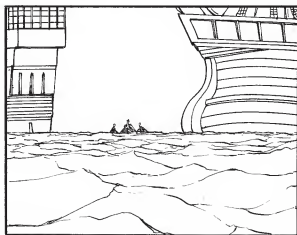
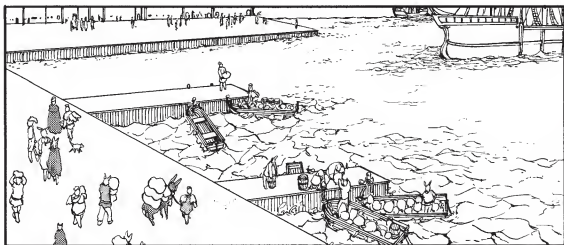


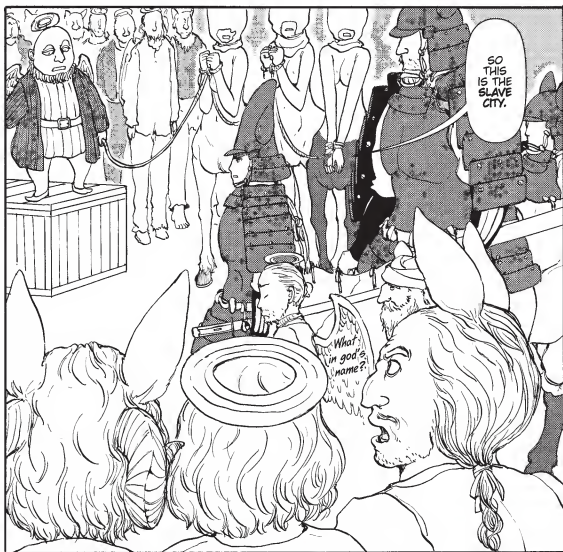
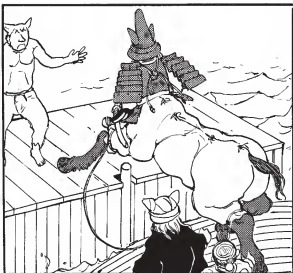
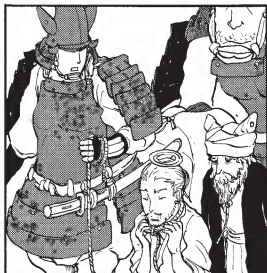
CHAPTER 47



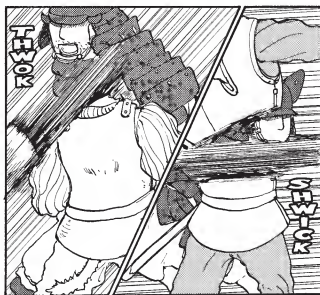
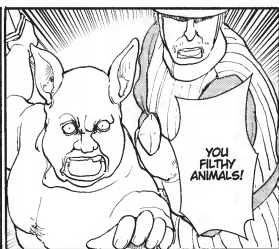


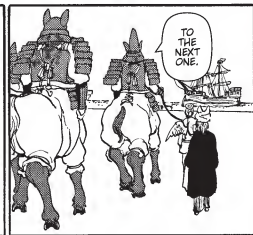
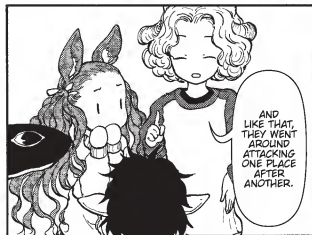
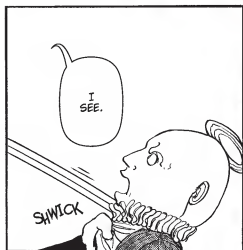


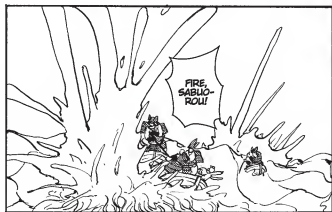
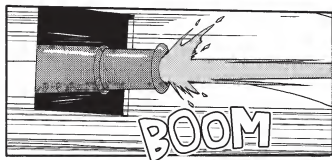
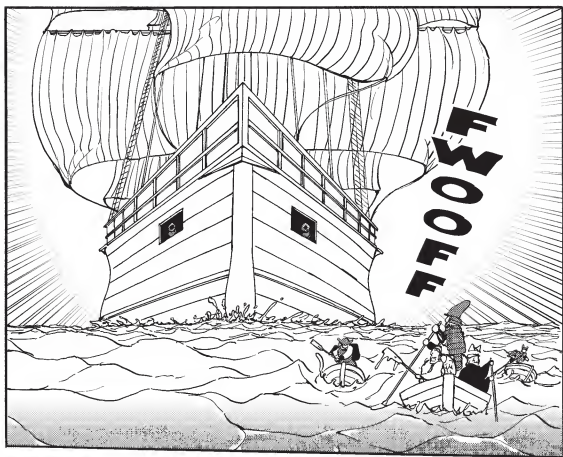


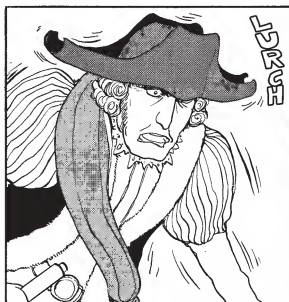
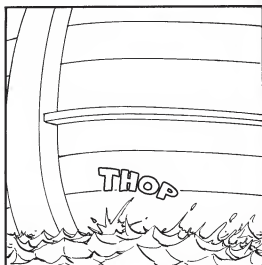


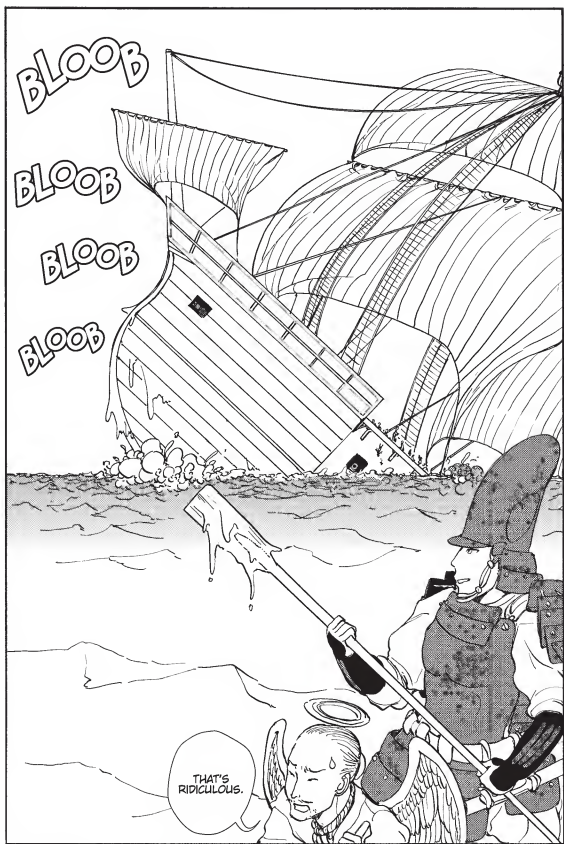


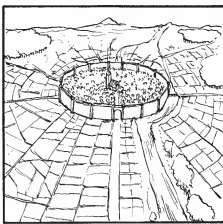
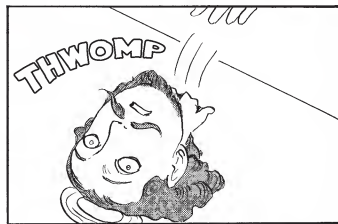
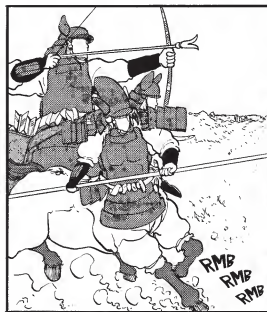
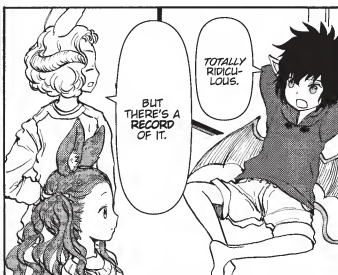


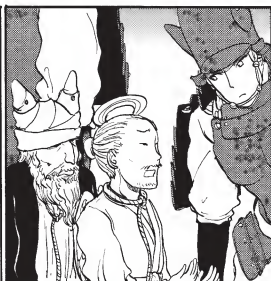
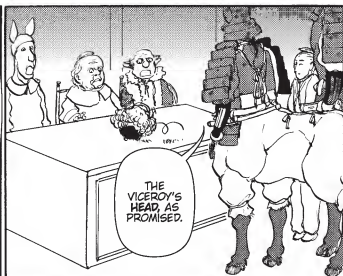


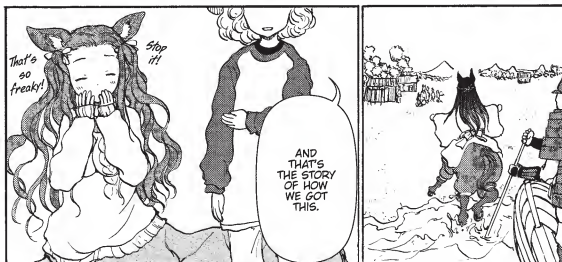
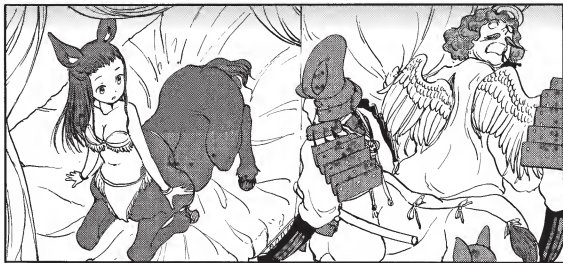
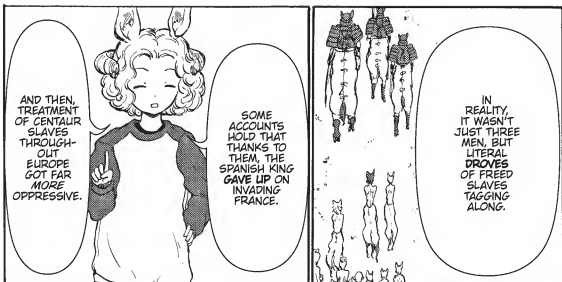










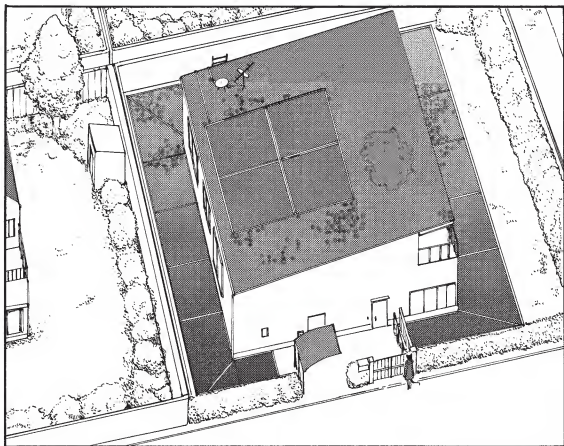


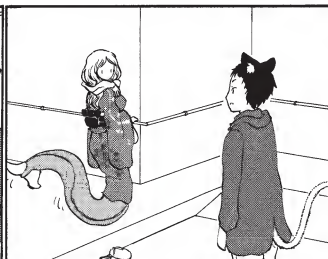
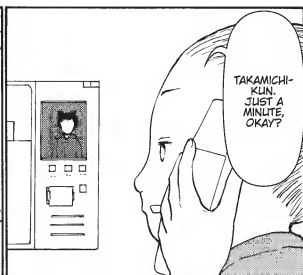
A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (KENYA)

WHILE THE METROPOLITAN CENTERS OF KENYA BEAR A STRONG EUROPEAN INFLUENCE, OTHER REGIONS STILL SERVE AS HOME TO NUMEROUS TRIBES, EACH WITH THEIR OWN UNIQUE TRADITIONS. IN THE TRADITIONAL FEMALE DRESS OF THE MAASAI TRIBE, WHICH HAS BEEN POPULARIZED IN CONTEMPORARY BOYS' FICTION, THE ORNATE NECKPIECES ADORNED WITH BEADS AND COWRIE SHELLS ARE PARTICULARLY EYE-CATCHING. THE BEADS IN THESE NECKPIECES ORIGINALLY CAME BY WAY OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE, AND ARE ARRANGED INTO INTRICATE, COLORFUL DESIGNS--RED REPRESENTS OX BLOOD, WHITE REPRESENTS COW'S MILK, AND BLUE REPRESENTS THE SKY. RED CLOTH WRAPS KNOWN AS *SHUKA* ALSO CONTRAST VIBRANTLY WITH THE EARTH. BUT THIS VIBRANCE IS NOT EXCLUSIVE TO THE WOMEN--THE MEN OF THE MAASAI TRIBE ARE ALSO INCREDIBLY FASHIONABLE.

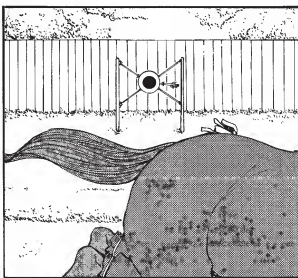
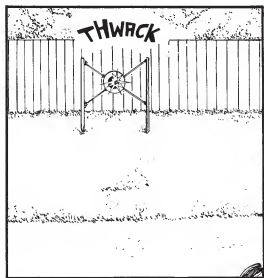
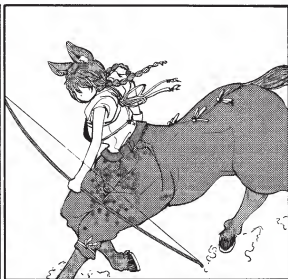
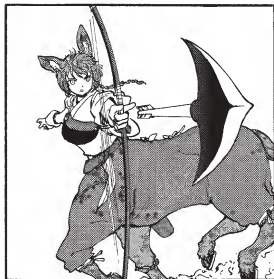
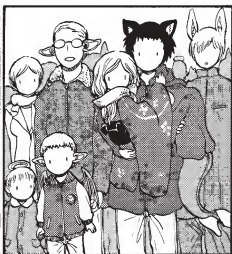


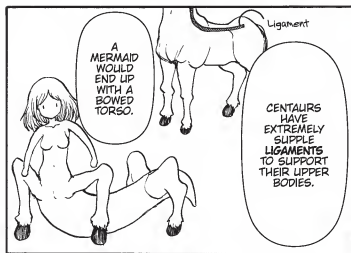
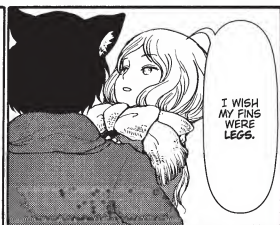
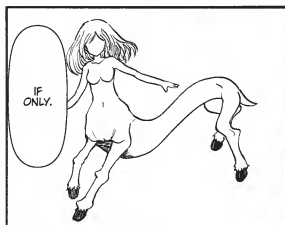
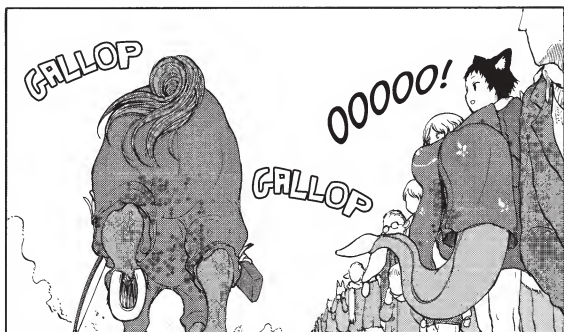


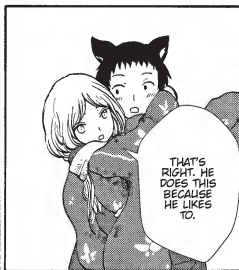
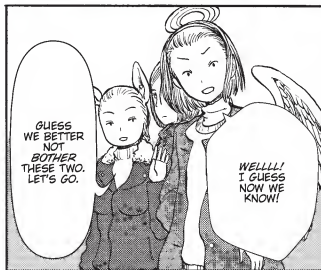
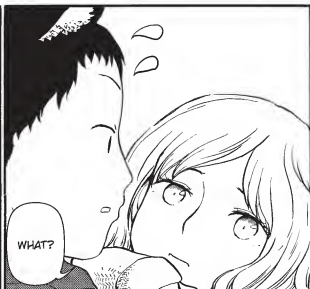
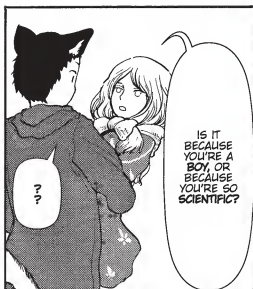


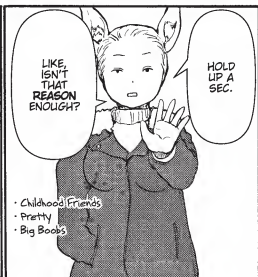
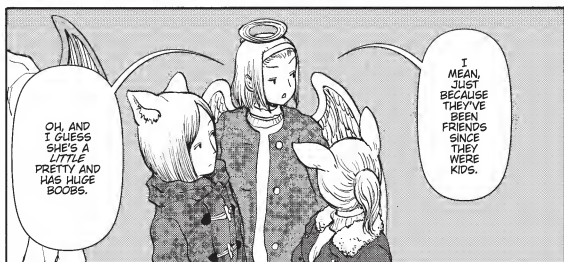
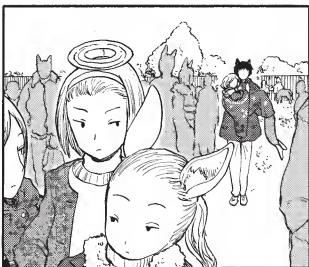
CHAPTER 48

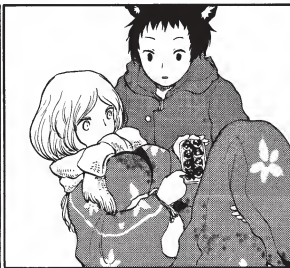
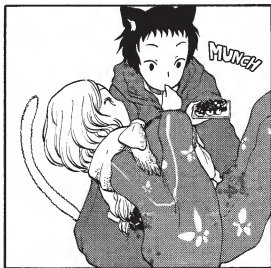
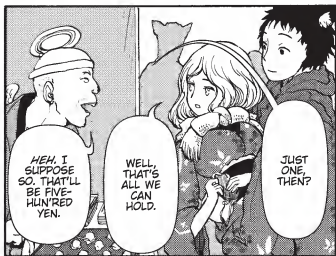


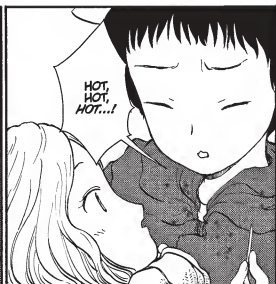
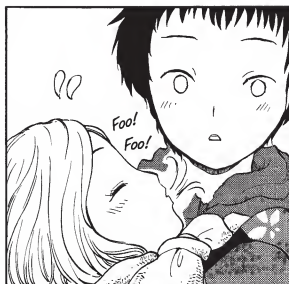




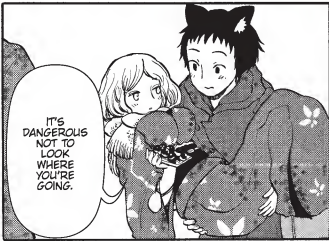
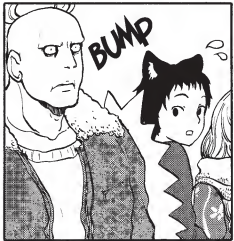
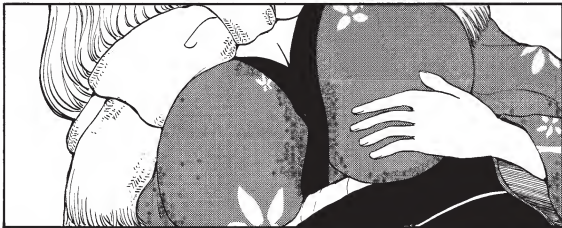
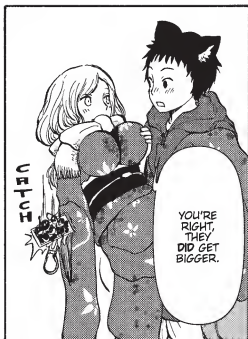


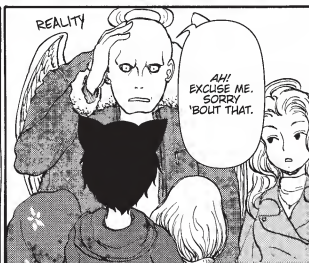
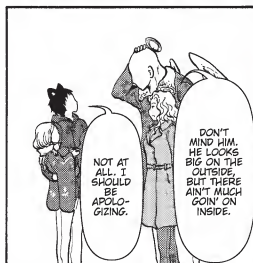
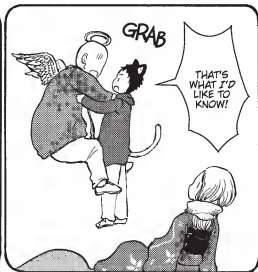
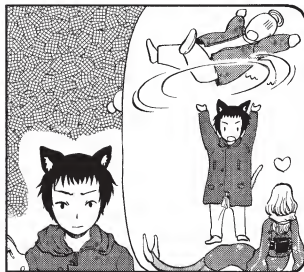
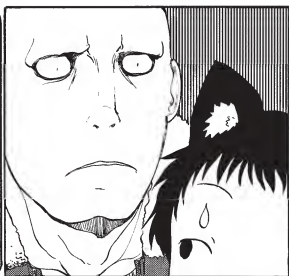
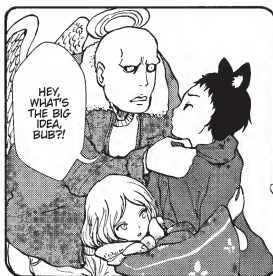


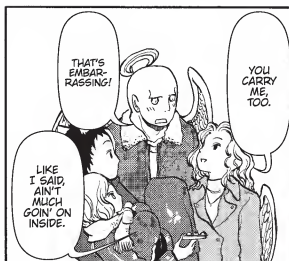


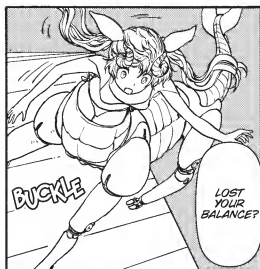
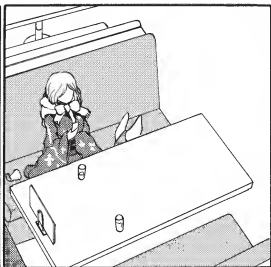
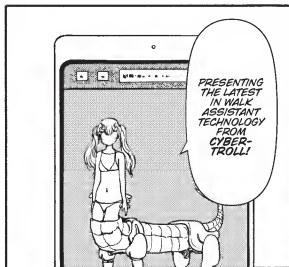






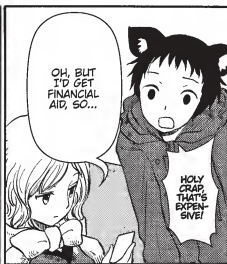
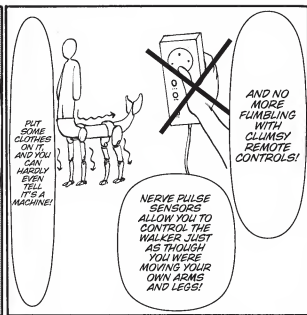








NOW, PROFESSOR, THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY THAT THE CORRECTIVE EQUALITY BUDGET IS ONLY BEING ALLOCATED TO MERPOLK CAUSES, AND THAT THIS IS MERELY REVERSE RACISM.



A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (ERITREA)

THE RASHAIDA TRIBE, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR TWO PERCENT OF THE ERITREAN POPULATION, ORIGINALLY MADE THEIR HOME IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA, BUT WERE DRIVEN BY WAR ACROSS THE RED SEA AND INTO AFRICA. CENTERED ON THE NUBIAN DESERT, THEY CAME TO LIVE NOMADICALLY, AND EVEN NOW SOME MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE MAKE THEIR HOME IN THE MIDDLE EAST, CARRYING OUT TRADE WITH ERITREA AND THE NEIGHBORING SUDAN, AS WELL AS THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. BECAUSE OF THIS BACKGROUND, MANY ARABIC CUSTOMS HAVE TAKEN DEEP ROOT WITHIN THE RASHAIDA CULTURE, SUCH AS THE DONNING OF FACE-CONCEALING BURQAS BY FEMALE MEMBERS. THESE, HOWEVER, ARE NOT THE PLAIN, SOLID BLACK BURQAS TYPICALLY PICTURED BY OUTSIDERS, BUT ARE IN FACT ADORNED "SO HEAVILY AS TO IMPEDE MOBILITY" IN BEAUTIFUL DECORATIONS PRIMARILY MADE OF SILVER.





**HARMONY
WITH
NATURE!
HARMONY
AMONGST
THE
PEOPLE!!**

**OUR
PEOPLE
ONCE
LIVED IN
HARMONY,
REGARDLESS
OF RACE!**

EVIL



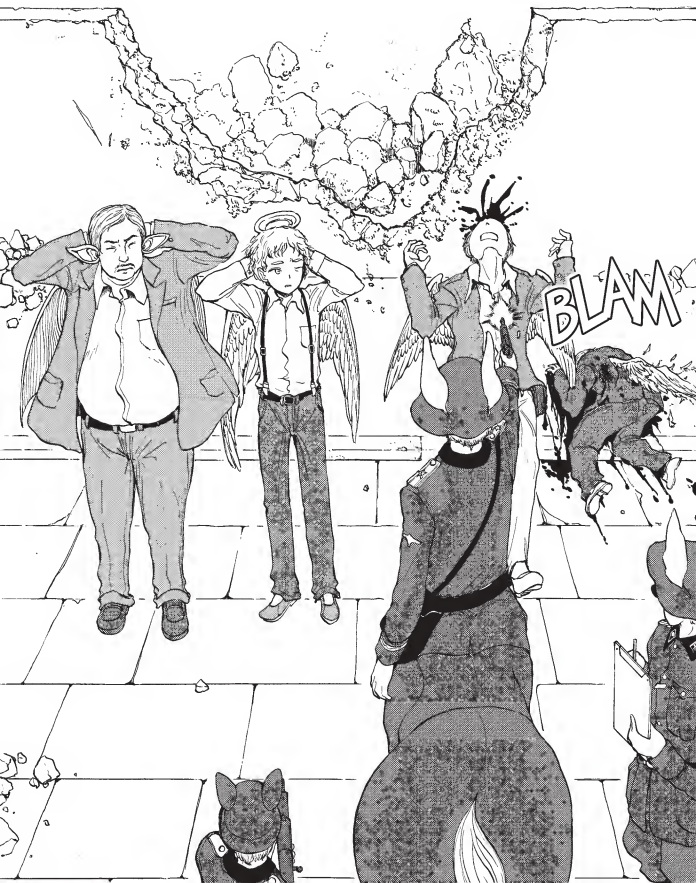
**NOW
IS THE
TIME TO
RETURN
THAT
HATRED
UNTO
THEM!!**

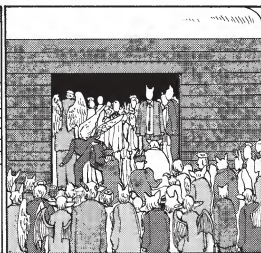
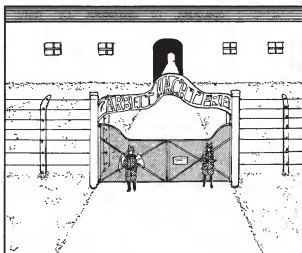
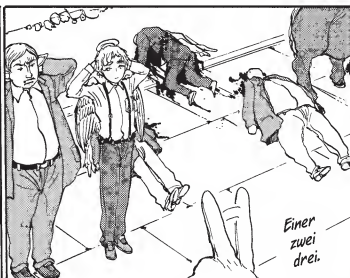


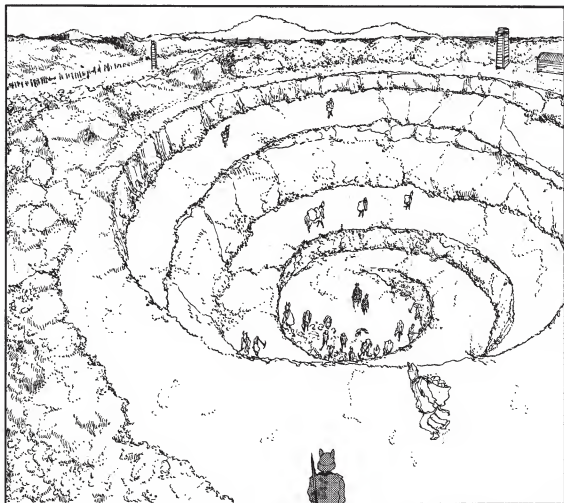
**HOWEVER,
PARASITES
CREPT IN,
SPREADING
HATRED AND
TEARING US
APART!**

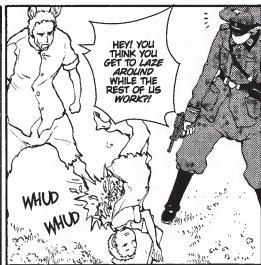
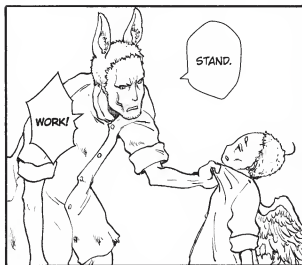
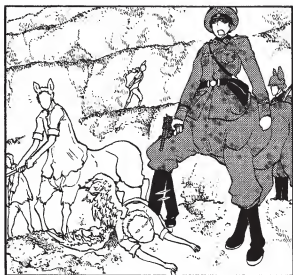
**AND IN
SO DOING,
THEY HAVE
GROWN
FAT WITH
WEALTH!**

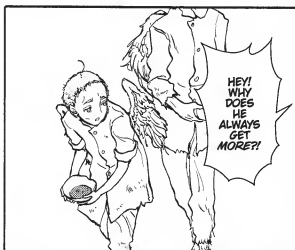
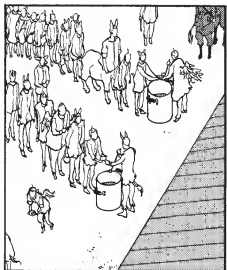
CHAPTER 49

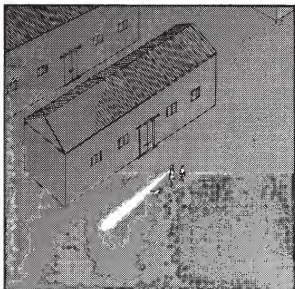




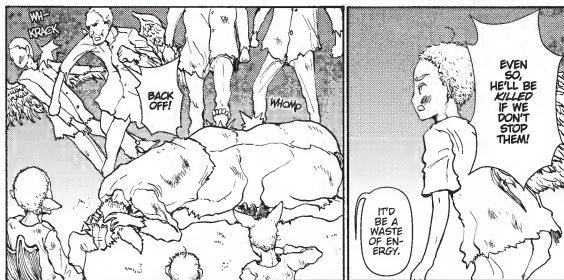
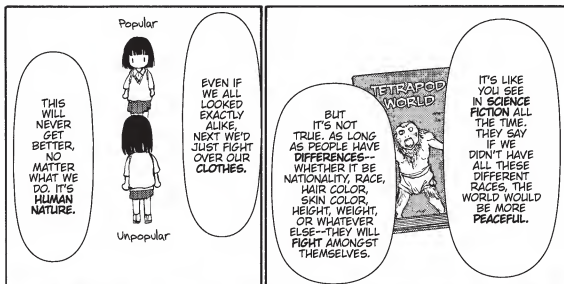


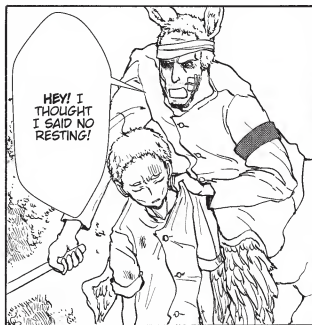
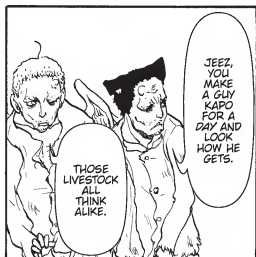
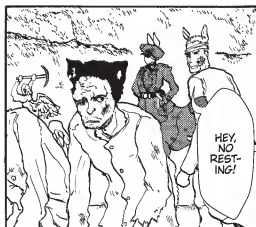


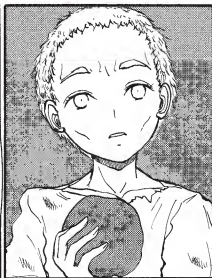
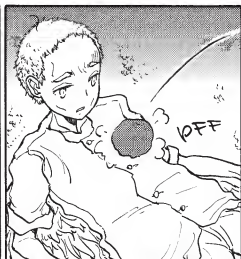
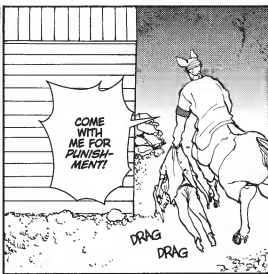
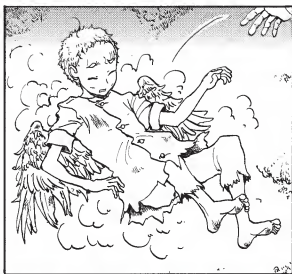


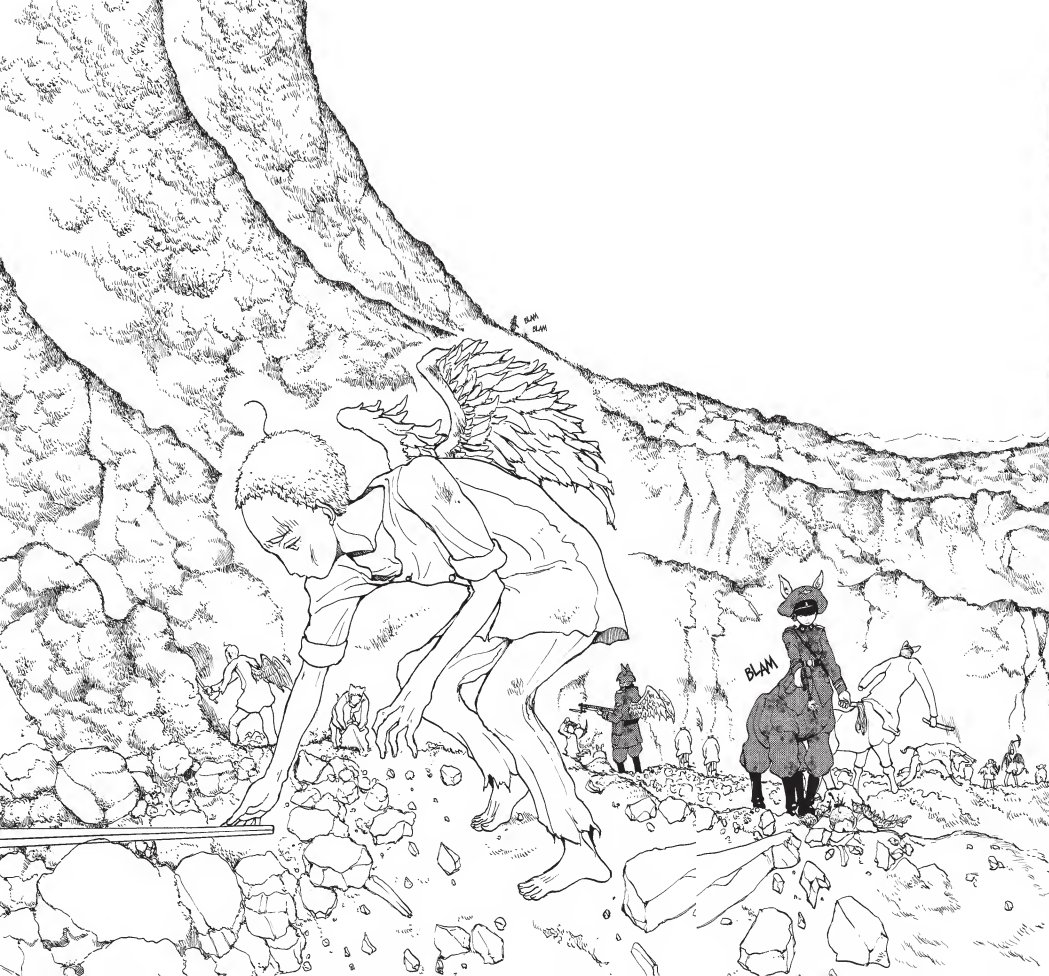


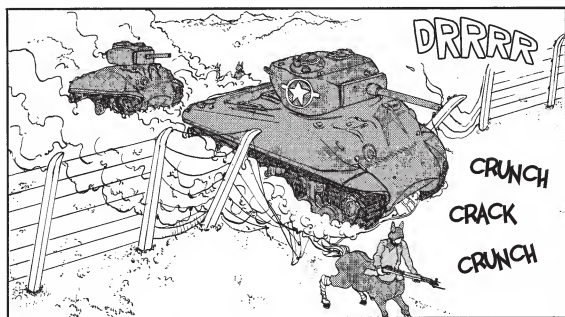
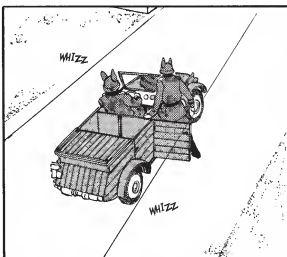
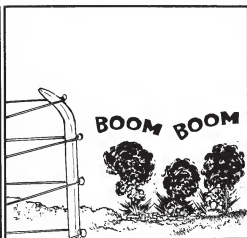
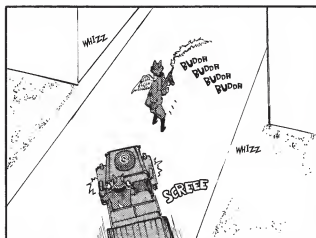


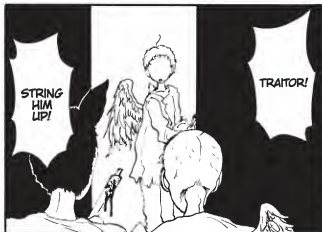
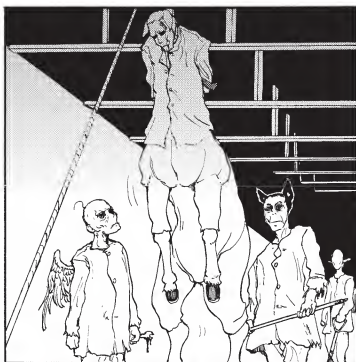


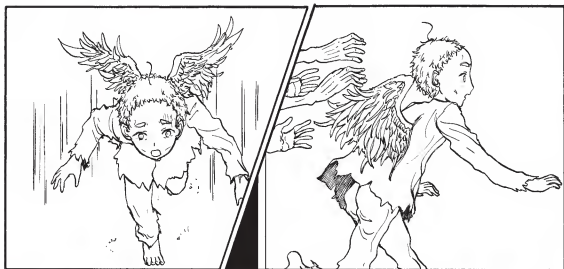


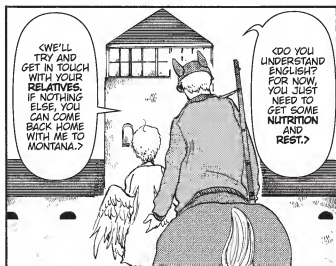
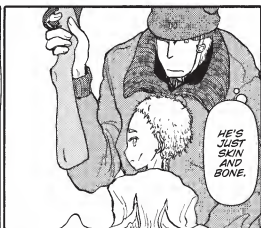


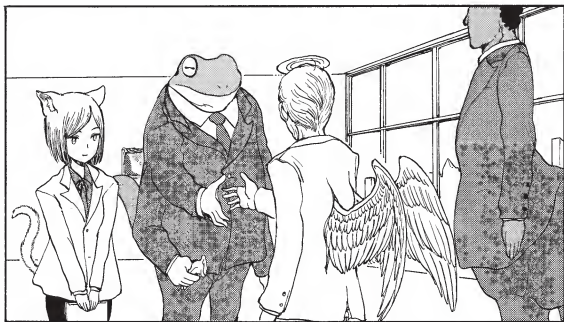
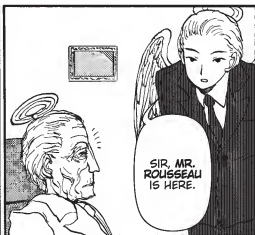
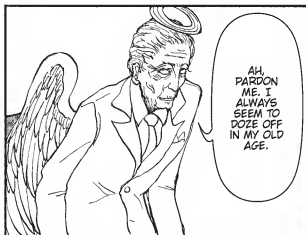
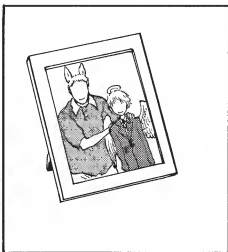










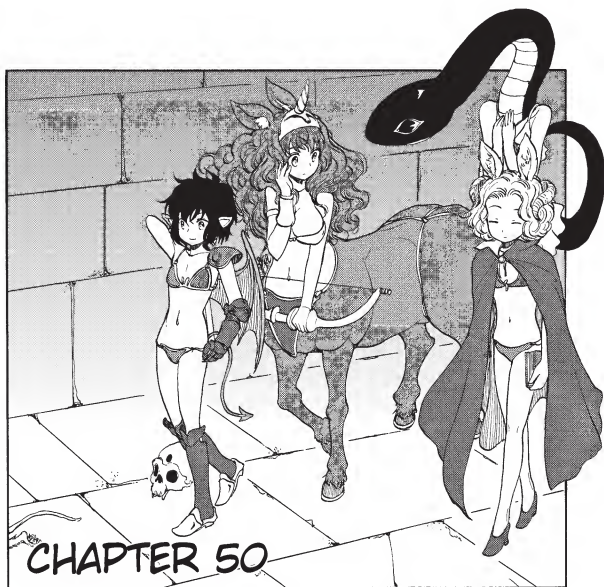
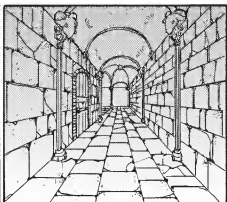
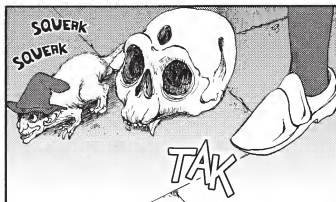


A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (THE AZTECS)

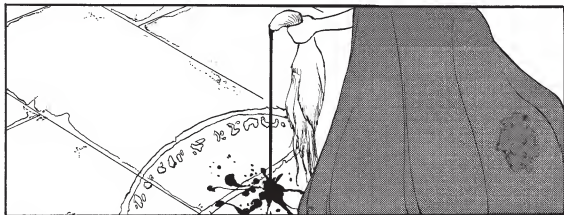
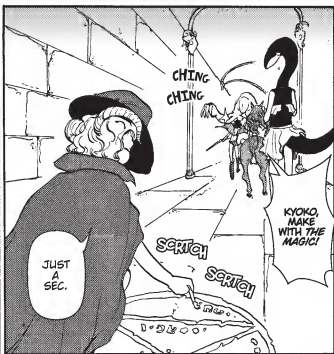
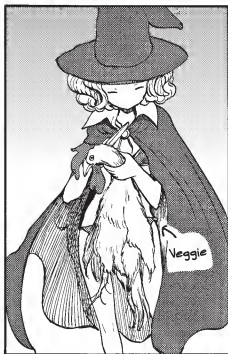
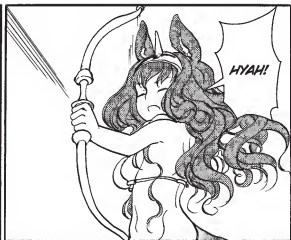
IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, THE MOST MENACING THING BROUGHT INTO THIS CENTRAL AMERICAN EMPIRE BY EUROPEAN CONQUERORS (CONQUISTADORS) WAS NEITHER METAL WEAPONS NOR FIREARMS, NOR HORSES, NOR CENTAUR SLAVES. IT WAS DISEASE. THE NATIVES, WHOSE BODIES HAD NO RESISTANCE TO THE FOREIGN PATHOGENS BROUGHT IN, WERE KILLED IN DROVES. IF THE ANTIARCTICANS HAD NOT COME TO THEIR AID, THE MEX/ACAH PEOPLE AND THEIR EMPIRE WOULD HAVE VANISHED COMPLETELY, LEAVING ONLY DEAD CITIES AND TEMPLES IN THEIR WAKE. NEVERTHELESS, THE EMPIRE DID ULTIMATELY COLLAPSE, AND THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AZTEC CIVILIZATION WAS USED TO FORM A UNION OF MULTIPLE TRIBES WHICH CLAIMED THE ALL BUT OBSOLETE EMPEROR AS ITS SYMBOLIC FIGUREHEAD. THE EMPEROR'S CLOTHING IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE LAVISH ADORNMENT OF GOLDEN DECORATIONS, AS WELL AS A CLOAK DECORATED WITH DESIGNS SOME THEORIZE ARE REFERENCES TO SECRET ANTARCTICAN KNOWLEDGE OTHERWISE UNKNOWN TO MAMMALIAN MANKIND. THESE ARTICLES, LIKE THE MANY MYSTERY-LADEN RITUALS OF THIS CIVILIZATION, ARE RARELY VIEWED BY THE EYES OF OUTSIDERS.

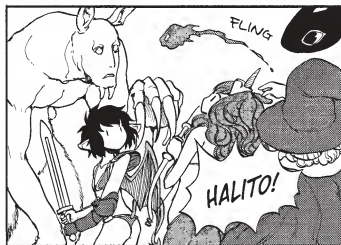
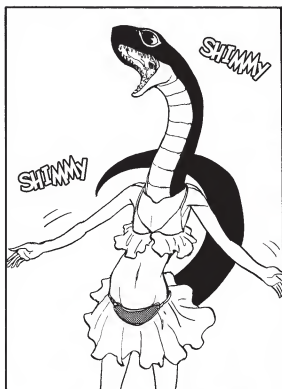


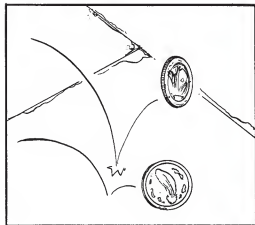


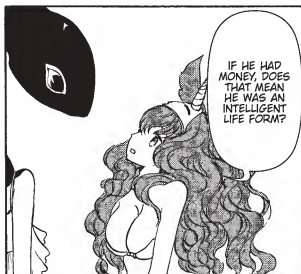


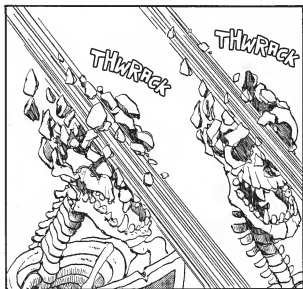
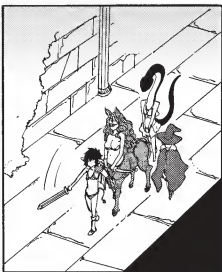


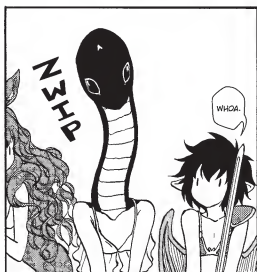
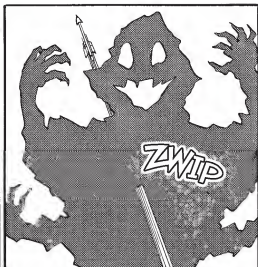


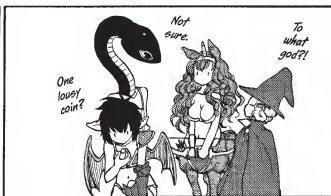


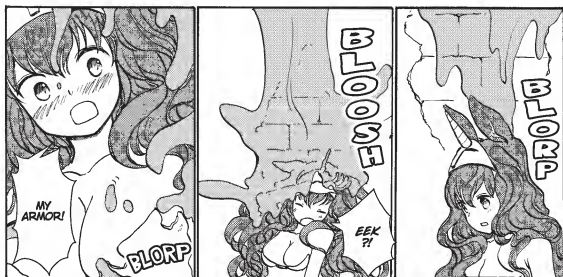
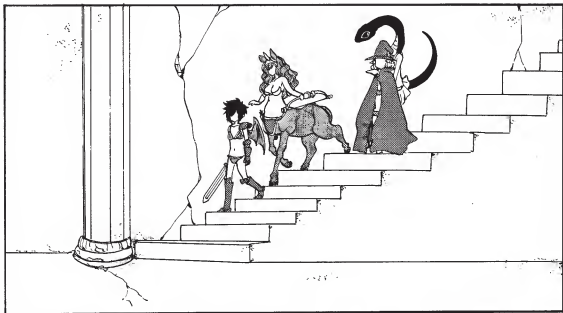




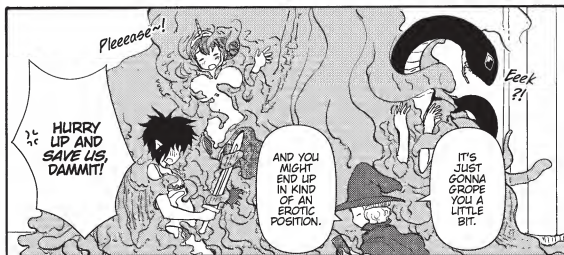


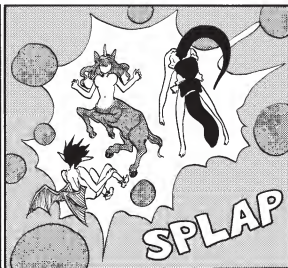
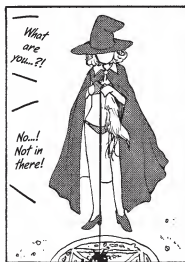


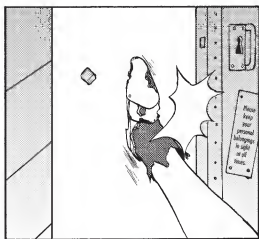


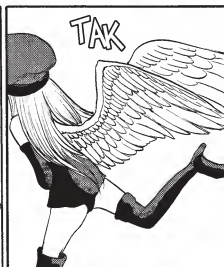
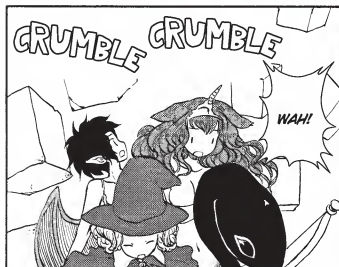


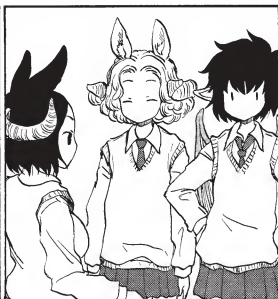
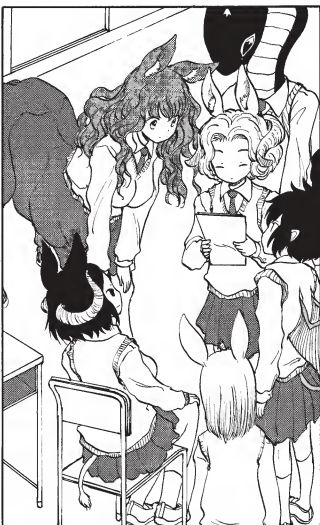
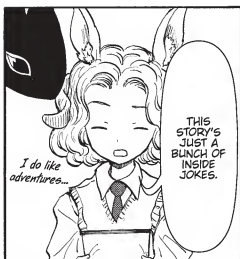












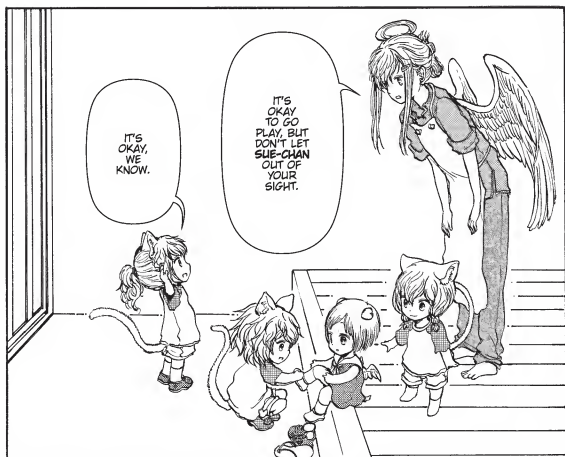
A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (JAPAN)

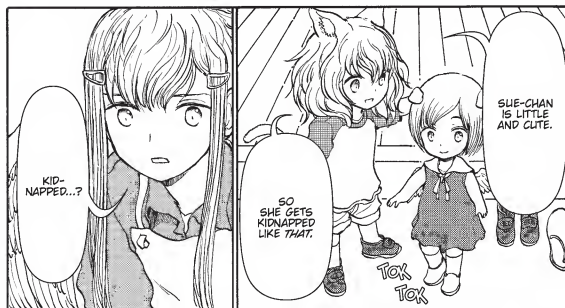
GARMENTS SUCH AS THE *ETCHU FUNDOSHI* AND *ROKUSHAKU FUNDOSHI* (DIFFERENT STYLES OF LOINCLOTH) ARE THOUGHT TO BE AGE-OLD, AND INDEED THERE WERE SUCH GARMENTS IN ANCIENT TIMES. HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT UNTIL RELATIVELY RECENTLY THAT THEY BECAME WIDESPREAD AMONGST THE COMMON MAN. CLOTH WAS ONCE AN EXTRAVAGANT ITEM--SO MUCH SO THAT TO WEAR IT SOMEWHERE UNSEEN TO PROTECT ONLY ONE SPECIFIC PART OF THE BODY WAS A PRACTICE RESERVED FOR THE WELL-TO-DO.

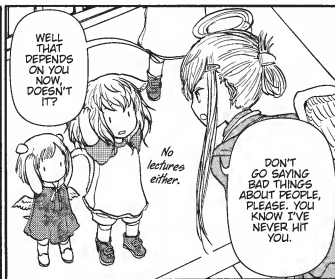
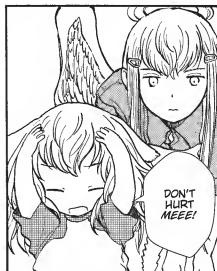
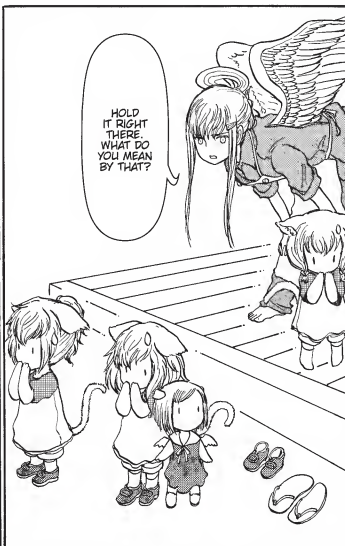
ANOTHER KNOWN FALLACY IS THAT MERFOLK OFTEN WORE *FUNDOSHI*. IN FACT, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE PRACTICE OF WEARING CLOTHES WAS NOT COMMON AMONGST MERFOLK UNTIL THE ADVENT OF BATHING SUITS MADE WITH SYNTHETIC FIBERS. WHEN INTERACTING WITH OTHER, LAND-BASED RACES, MERFOLK DO MAKE AN EFFORT TO WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING, AND LAND-BASED MERFOLK WHO LIVE AMONGST OTHER RACES DAY-TO-DAY DO WEAR REGULAR CLOTHES AS A DAILY HABIT. IN EITHER CASE, FEMALE MERFOLK TYPICALLY DRESS APPROPRIATELY IN PUBLIC--IT'S UNLIKELY THAT ONE WOULD REVEAL HERSELF IN JUST HER UNDERWEAR. HENCE, ILLUSTRATIONS LIKE THE ONE BELOW ARE LIKELY JUST DESIGNED TO BE SUGGESTIVE.

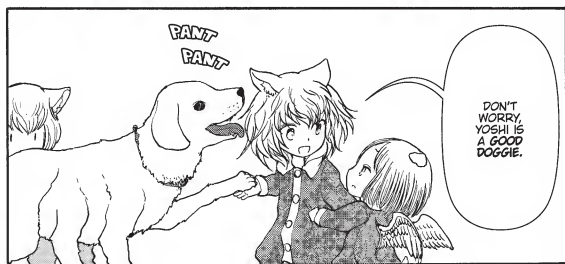
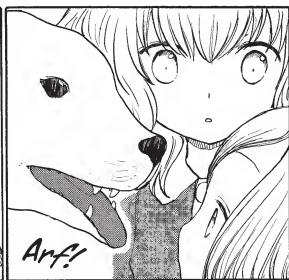
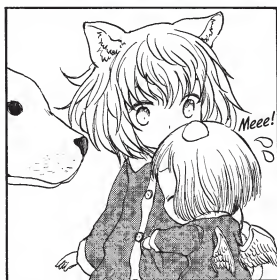
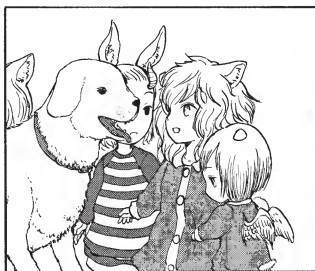


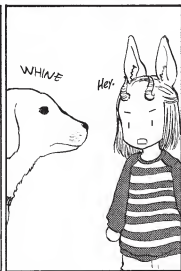
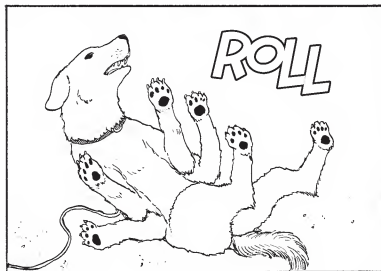
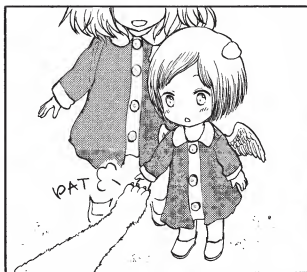


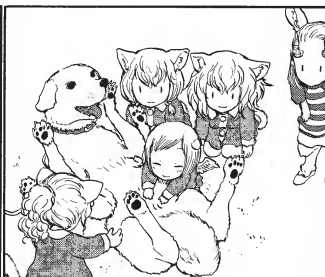
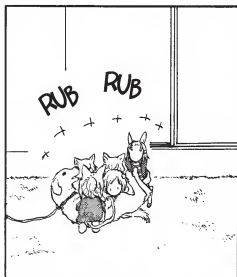
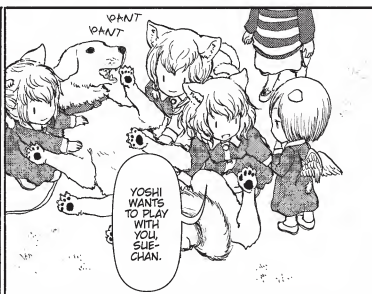
CHAPTER 51

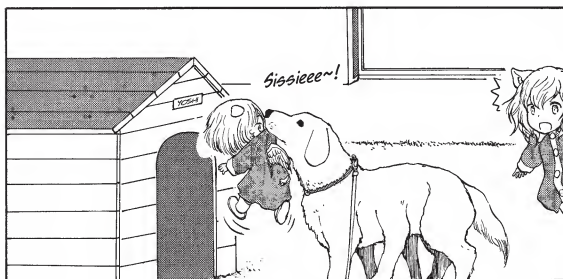
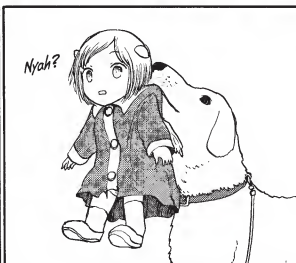
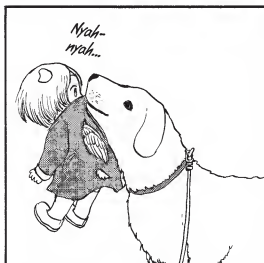
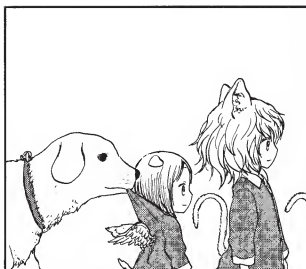


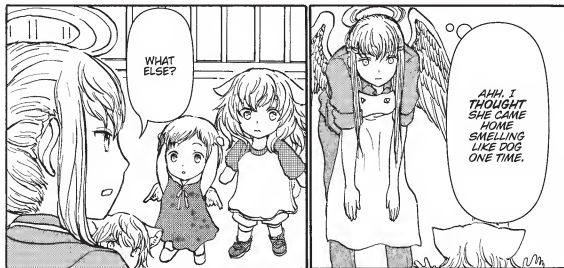


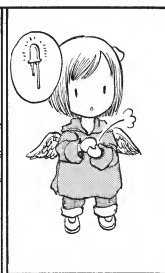
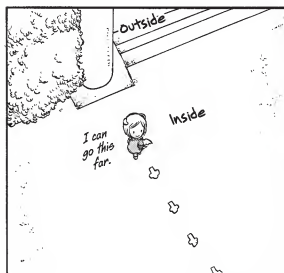
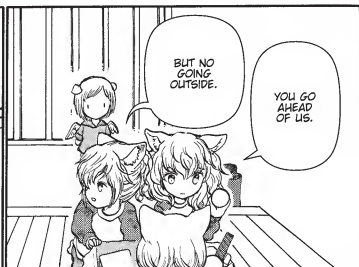
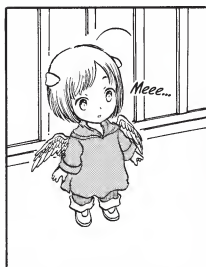
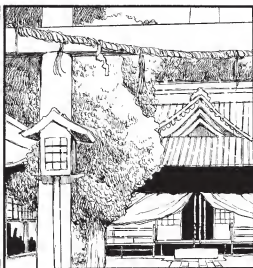


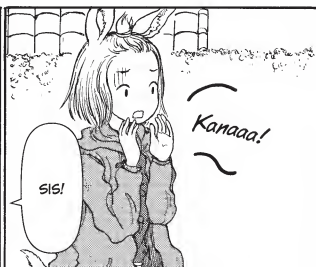
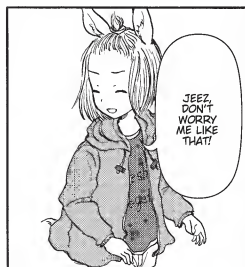
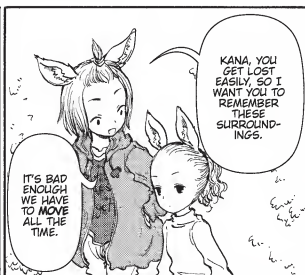
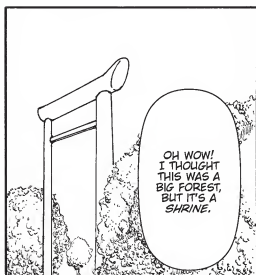


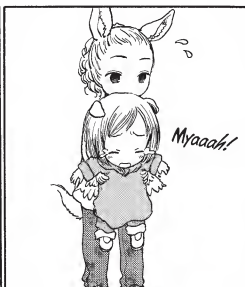
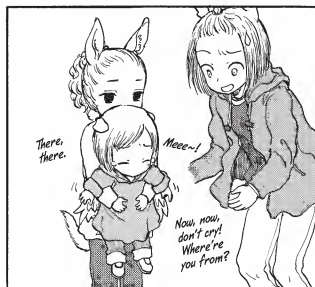
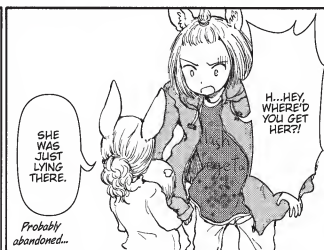
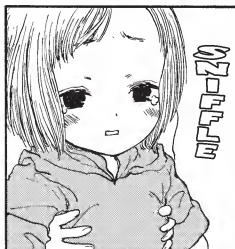
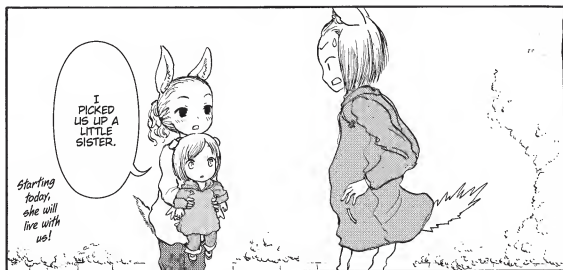


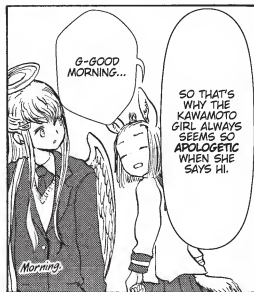
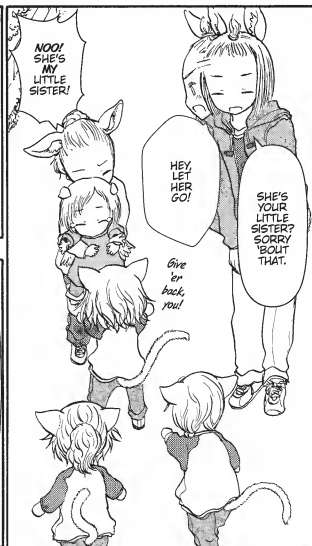
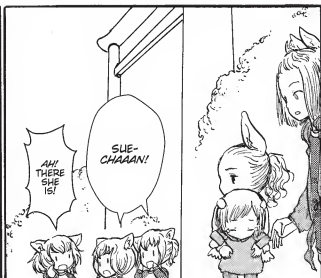


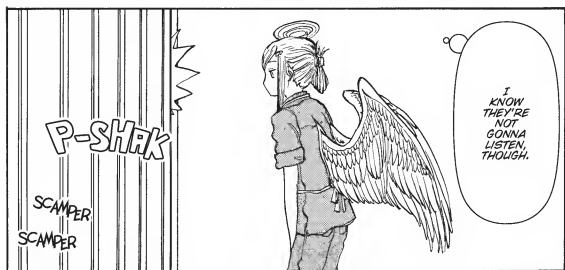
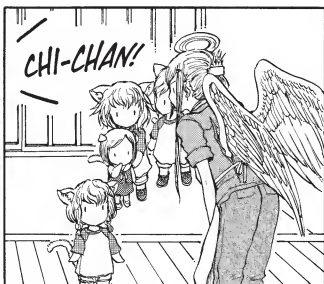












A CentaUr's Life

TRADITIONAL DRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (COLOMBIA)

THE AMPHIBIANFOLK ARE NATIVE TO TROPICAL RAIN FORESTS SPANNING COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, AND BRAZIL, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS ADJACENT TO RIVERS. THE DEROGATORY TERM "FROG PEOPLE" HAS GIVEN WAY TO AN IMAGE OF PEOPLE WITH WET, MUCOUSY SKIN, BUT THAT'S NOT PARTICULARLY ACCURATE. IN REALITY, THEIR SKIN RESPIRATION IS COMPARABLE TO THAT OF A MAMMALIAN HUMAN, THOUGH THEY ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO DRY SKIN. THIS, THEY ARE ABLE TO WEAR THE SAME CLOTHES AS MAMMALIAN HUMANS (ALBEIT IN DIFFERENT MEASUREMENTS), AND INDEED YOU ARE LIKELY TO SPOT AMPHIBIANFOLK IN T-SHIRTS OR WAISTCLOTHS. THAT SAID, SINCE AMPHIBIANFOLK LEAD LIVES DIVIDED BETWEEN WATER AND LAND, IT IS NOT COMMON TO SEE THEM WEARING VERY MUCH, AND INDEED THEIR CULTURE HAS NO PARTICULAR RESERVATIONS ABOUT NUDITY.

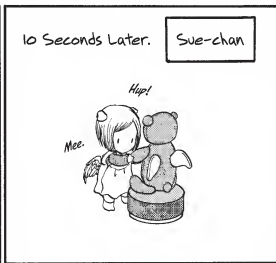
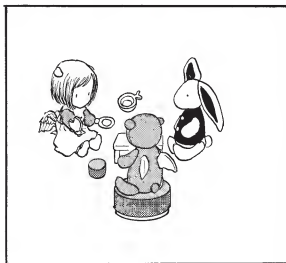
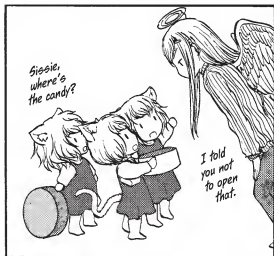
MORE REMARKABLE ARE THE BITS OF JEWELRY WORN BY AMPHIBIANFOLK AS PERSONAL ORNAMENTS, MOST OF WHICH ARE MADE OF GOLD. THOUGH DIFFICULT TO PRODUCE OR OBTAIN, IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY PREFER GOLD MAINLY BECAUSE IT DOESN'T RUST. HANDMADE MASKS WHICH MIMIC MAMMALIAN HUMAN FACES BEAR A STRONG RESEMBLANCE TO THOSE WORN BY THE ANTARCTICANS LIVING AMONGST MAMMALIAN HUMANS, AND IT IS UNKNOWN IN WHICH CULTURE THEY ACTUALLY ORIGINATED. IN EITHER CASE, THESE MASKS SERVE AS EVIDENCE OF INTERACTION WITH MAMMALIAN HUMANS PRIOR TO THE MODERN AGE. THE GOLDEN JEWELRY, MEANWHILE, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT MISFORTUNE OF ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF EUROPEAN CONQUISTADORS, WHO WOULD LONG PERSECUTE AMPHIBIANFOLK AS "FROGS AND NEWTS RIFE FOR THE KILL," LEADING TO THE MASSIVE LOSS OF PRECIOUS CULTURAL ARTIFACTS.

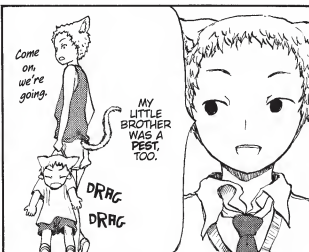
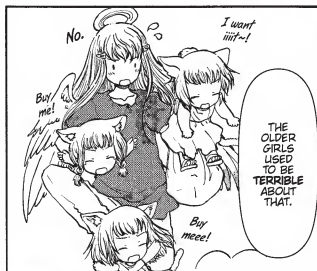
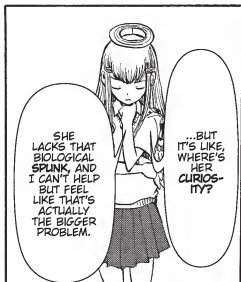
THOUGH THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF AMPHIBIAN-FOLK, SUCH AS JEAN ROUSSEAU, SECURING POSITIONS OF HIGH ESTEEM WITHIN MAMMALIAN SOCIETY, THE FACT THAT THIS MANNER OF DISCRIMINATION IS STILL SO DEEPLY ROOTED SERVES AS DEPLORABLE EVIDENCE OF ITS OWN FOOLISH INJUSTICE.

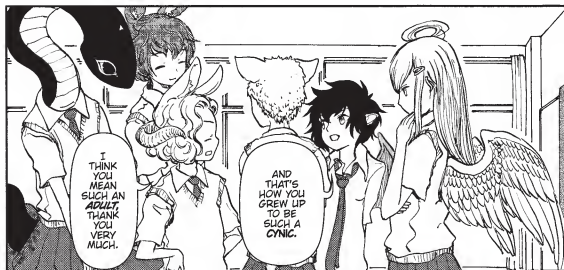
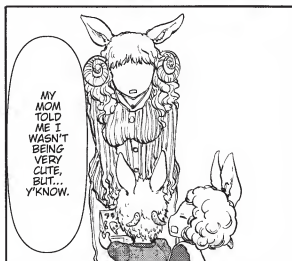


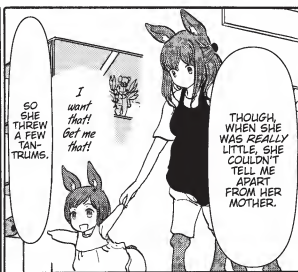
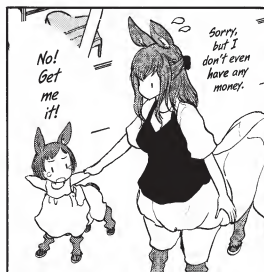
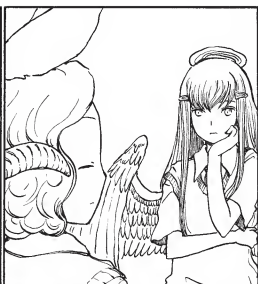
CHAPTER 52

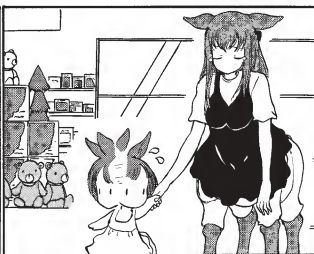
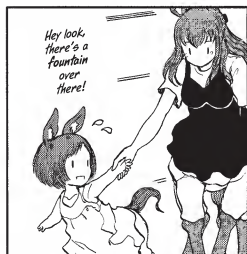
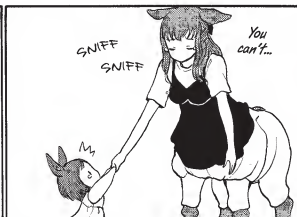
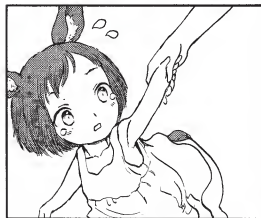
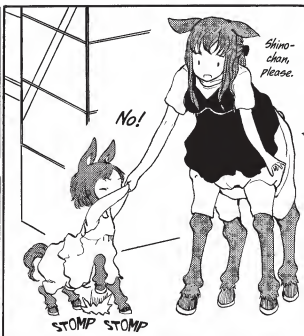


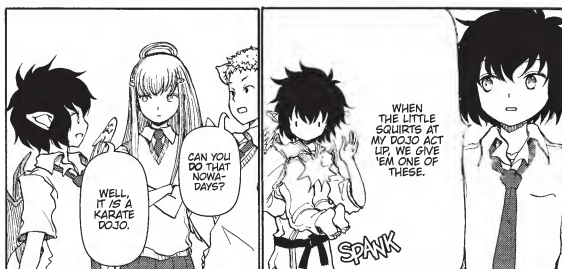
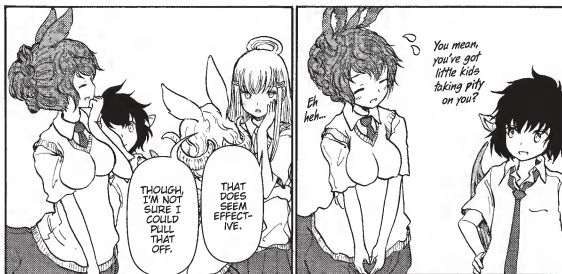




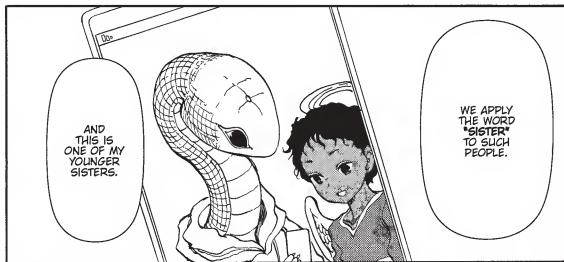
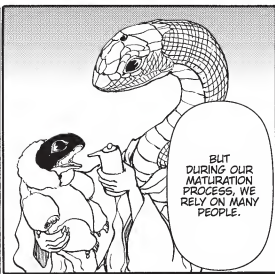
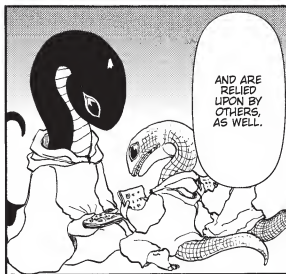
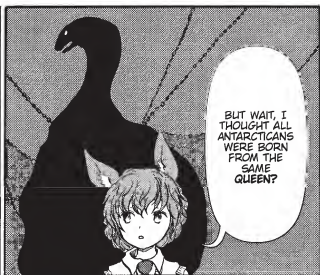
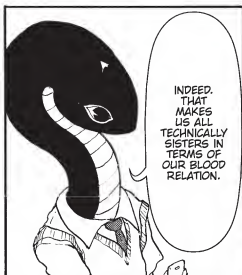


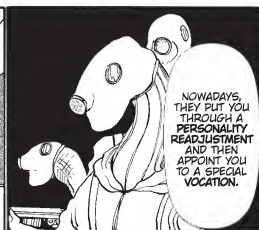
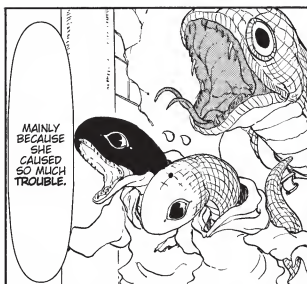


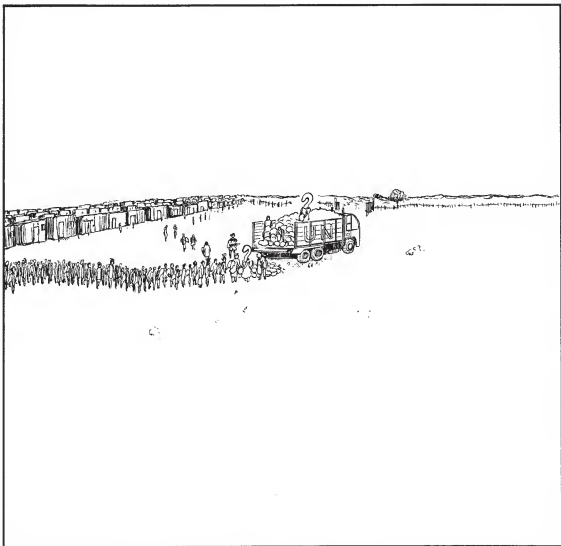


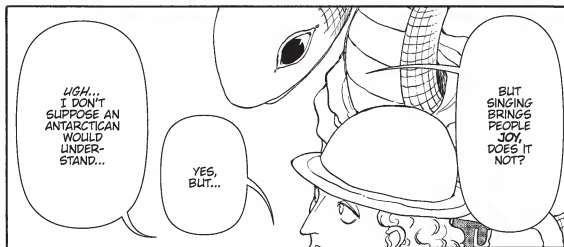
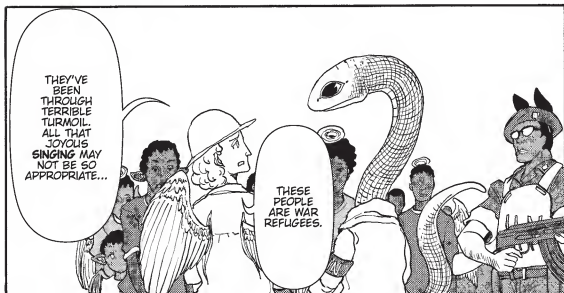


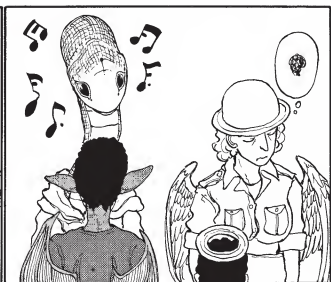
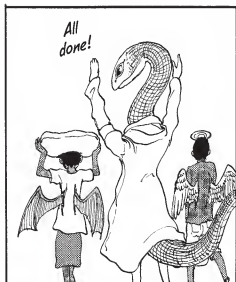


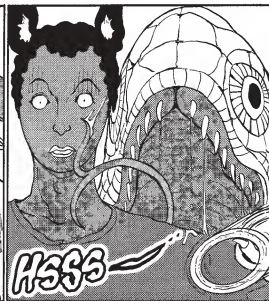
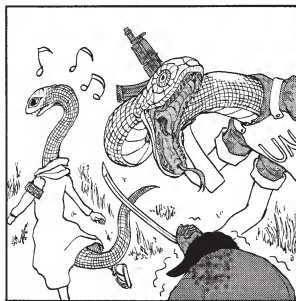


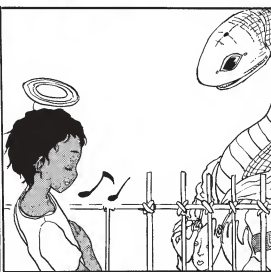
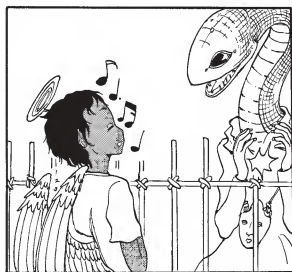
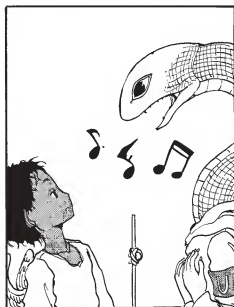
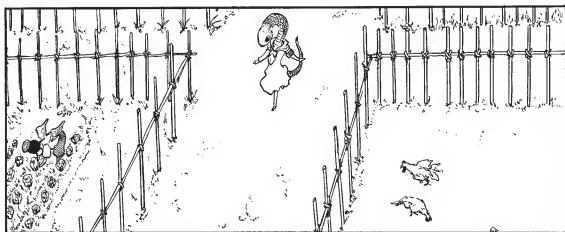




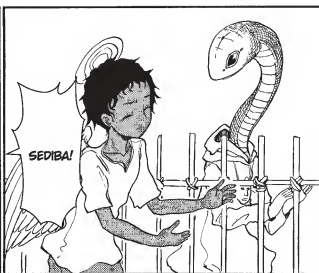




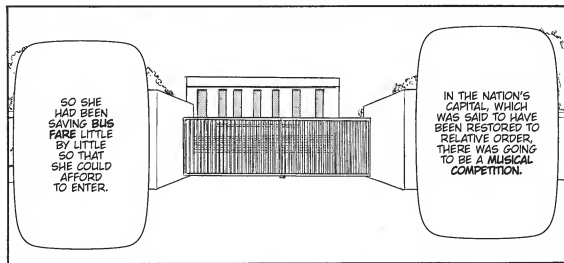
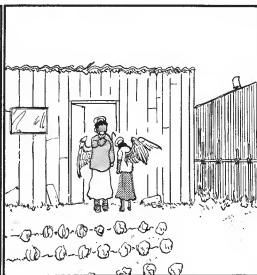






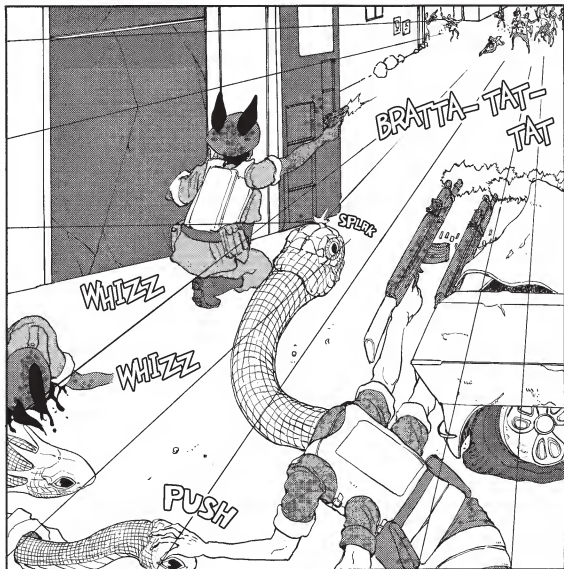
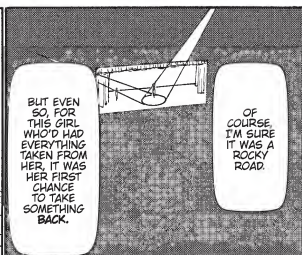
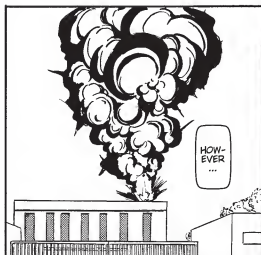


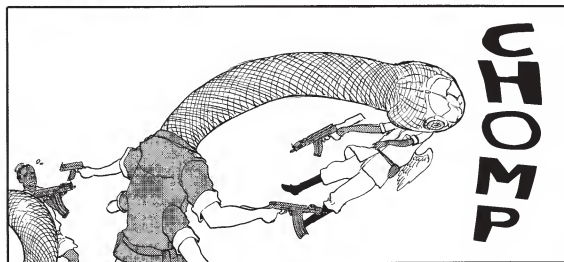
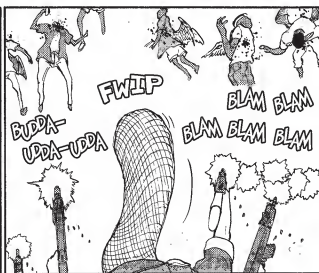
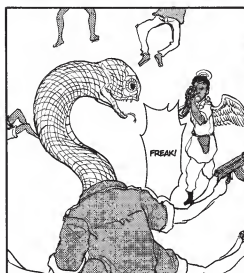
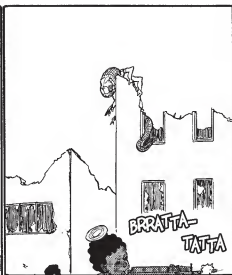
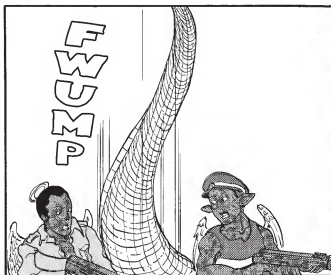
SEDIBA HAD
LOST HER
PARENTS AND
WAS LIVING
WITH RELATIVES.
SHE DREAMED
OF BECOMING
A SINGER.

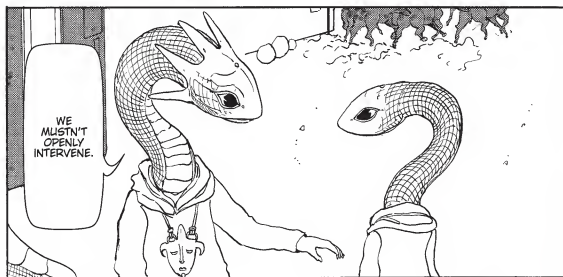
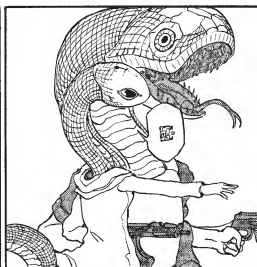
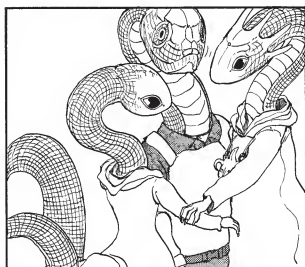
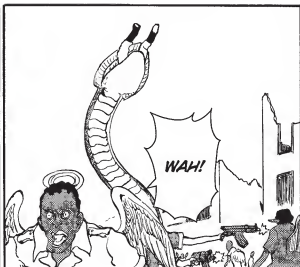


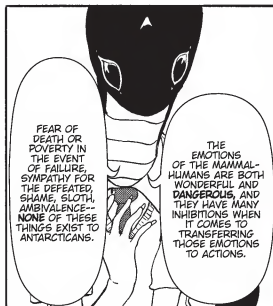
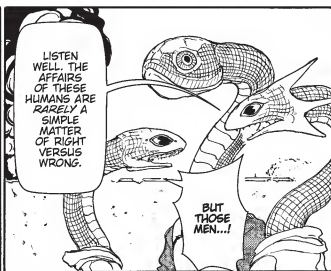
SO SHE
HAD BEEN
SAVING BUS
FARE LITTLE
BY LITTLE
SO THAT
SHE COULD
AFFORD
TO ENTER.

IN THE NATION'S
CAPITAL, WHICH
WAS SAID TO HAVE
BEEN RESTORED TO
RELATIVE ORDER,
THERE WAS GOING
TO BE A MUSICAL
COMPETITION.

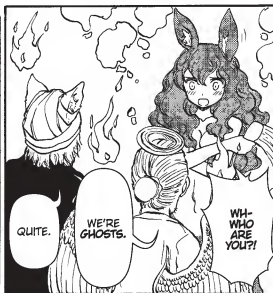
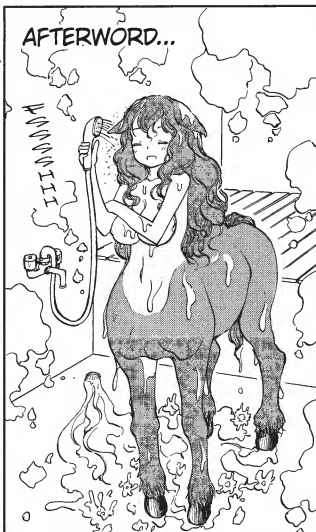
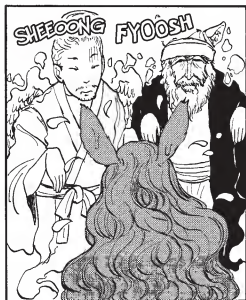


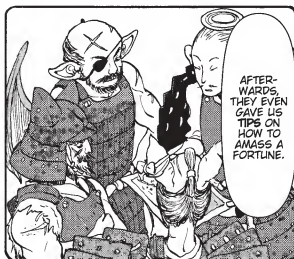






A CentaUr's Life



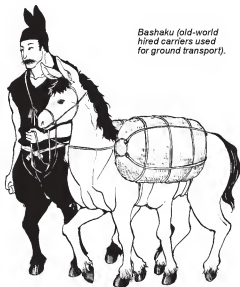


THE TRUE IMAGE OF THE BUSHI

*Bushi** are centaurs--this idea is still strongly held in today's world. Indeed, even in recent history, samurai were all portrayed as centaurs in popular period dramas. And yes, there was an intrinsic belief even amongst *bushi* that the vocation was, at heart, one of a centaur. In reality, however, the *bushi* class comprised a diverse range of humans.

In ancient dynasties, militaries were scraped together from soldiers belonging to powerful aristocratic families; under the *ritsuryou* system, they were formed through mandatory military service. But as occupations eventually became divided by clan, inevitably clans specializing in military affairs emerged. Among them, the En clan and Hou clan were quintessential. These clans were able to repel the horseback guerilla tactics of foreign, northern invaders by establishing a small but elite military consisting solely of swift-footed centaurs armed with bows. It is true that at this point in time, *bushi* were all centaurs. However, as these *bushi* clans were roped into civil disputes within the dynasty, the two pillars of military leadership that were the En and Hou soon began to vie for supremacy. What had previously been militaries composed of several dozen or several hundred units exploded practically overnight into militaries with tens of thousands of units. However, there were considerably fewer centaurs in ancient times than there are in the modern day, and there were simply not enough to fulfill the tremendous demand. Hence, a new class of warrior emerged in the clash between En and Hou--wealthy aristocrats and strong farmers, who were neither centaurs nor *bushi*, mounted horses and took to arms. In return for their service, they were allowed control over territory or *shôen*. But these "overnight soldiers," who now accounted for the majority of each clan's military force, were incapable of engaging in battle tactics which required a great amount of skill with, say, firing a bow. Instead, they began to engage the enemy up close, approaching on horse, grappling, and taking the head of the opponent. The odd image of two intertwined centaurs once common in *Taiga dorama* series** likely originates from this.

After the establishment of the Kamikura Bakufu, the percentage of *bushi* who were centaurs once again rose to some degree. This is likely due to the new class of *bushi* frequently intermarrying with centaur lineage within the En and Hou clans. Centaurs did not account for the majority of *bushi****, but *only* centaurs could claim to be of legitimate military families. There are even accounts of non-centaurs interbreeding with centaurs who were *not* of a *bushi* lineage (or *any* notable lineage, for that matter), or otherwise adopting centaurs as their children.



Bashaku (old-world hired carriers used for ground transport).



**Bushi*: A Japanese warrior; a samurai.

***Taiga drama*, the name of an annual historical fiction TV show broadcast in Japan.

***Indeed, not all centaurs were *bushi*. *Bushi* were actually a minority within the centaur race, while most were, like other humans, simple farmers or members of other occupations. Of particular note, many centaurs traditionally worked as *bashaku*--hired horses used for transport. This was akin to the merfolk's monopolization of the navy. Likewise akin was this monopoly's collapse in more recent history.

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Research has suggested that a great number of *bushi* family lines were established in this way.

During the *Sengoku* period, the ratio of centaurs to all *bushi* once again declined. The most vital thing demanded of samurai was neither a strong family lineage nor even military prowess-- it was how many men one had under his control. One's ability and experience as a commander was valued above all. In the face of new logical tactics, firearms, and advanced citadel structures, the quick feet and sturdy frames of centaurs no longer provided quite the battlefield advantage that they once had. And indeed, there are not many *Sengoku* daimyo family lines which can be confirmed to have had a multi-generational centaur bloodline. Toyotomi Hideyoshi is well known to have been a draconid*, but even the ultimate ruler of this household, Tokugawa Ieyasu, was in fact goatfolk, despite portraits falsely depicting him as a centaur. It wasn't until the reign of the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi, that the Tokugawa clan adopted a centaur bloodline**. Even then, the clan continued to frequently bear non-centaur offspring, such as eighth shogun Yoshimune. Nevertheless, the ideal of the centaur bushi, perhaps propagated by literary works such as the *Tale of Houke*, has prevailed to this day.

If one detaches from these popular colloquial myths and simply observes the historical facts, however, one will find that at no point was any one species ever singled out and enslaved by any other. The Western concept of observing history through the lens of "species-based class conflict" was rather born out of the West's morally scarred history of keeping centaurs as slaves and systemized extermination of the merfolk, and in no way applies to our nation. Our nation, with its beautiful history of cooperation and coexistence amongst a diverse people, must, as a world leader, rectify this widespread fallacy and lead others to the truth.

■ KANATA UNDER THE TOKUGAWA REGIME

After the demise of the Oda clan, Hidachi mostly fell under the rule of the Satake clan, but in 1602 (Keichou 7), the clan underwent *ryōchi-gae* (change of territory), shifting its domain to Idewa and leaving Hidachi behind. Thereafter, control of southern Hidachi, which encompassed the region of modern-day Kanata, would pass through the hands of several long-established daimyo clans. This includes the Yuuki, who would pepper the domain with tens of thousands of small enclaves--retainer domains, Bakufu domains, and religious domains. Oda castle became an abandoned ruin, and Kanata reverted to mere farmland. The tides of change, however, were sure to come.



*Even the famous swordsman Miyamoto Musashi was but a mere ashigaru soldier--the lowest ranking foot soldier--during his service in the Shimabara Rebellion. Nevertheless, he worked so ceaselessly and humbly, never once boasting his above-average centaur frame or martial art prowess, that he even sustained serious injury from hurling boulders.

**The Oda clan oft referenced in this text, as well as their sworn enemy the Satake clan, did maintain multi-generational centaur bloodlines dating back to the En-Hou period.

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story and art by KEI MURAYAMA

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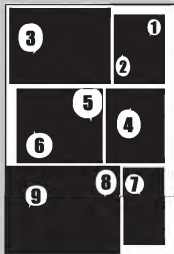
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Hime, Kyoko, and Nozomi shadow Suu while she is out on a date, and happen to run into some other classmates out on a date as well. We learn more tales of Hime's ancestors, and the class prez frets about child-rearing, all in Volume 8!

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